

THE A-Z OF **SCI-FI TV**

DOCTOR WHO

Steven Moffat on the show's past, present and future

GAME OF THRONES

Everything you need to know about season three

PLUS!

10

SHOWS THAT CHANGED TV FOREVER



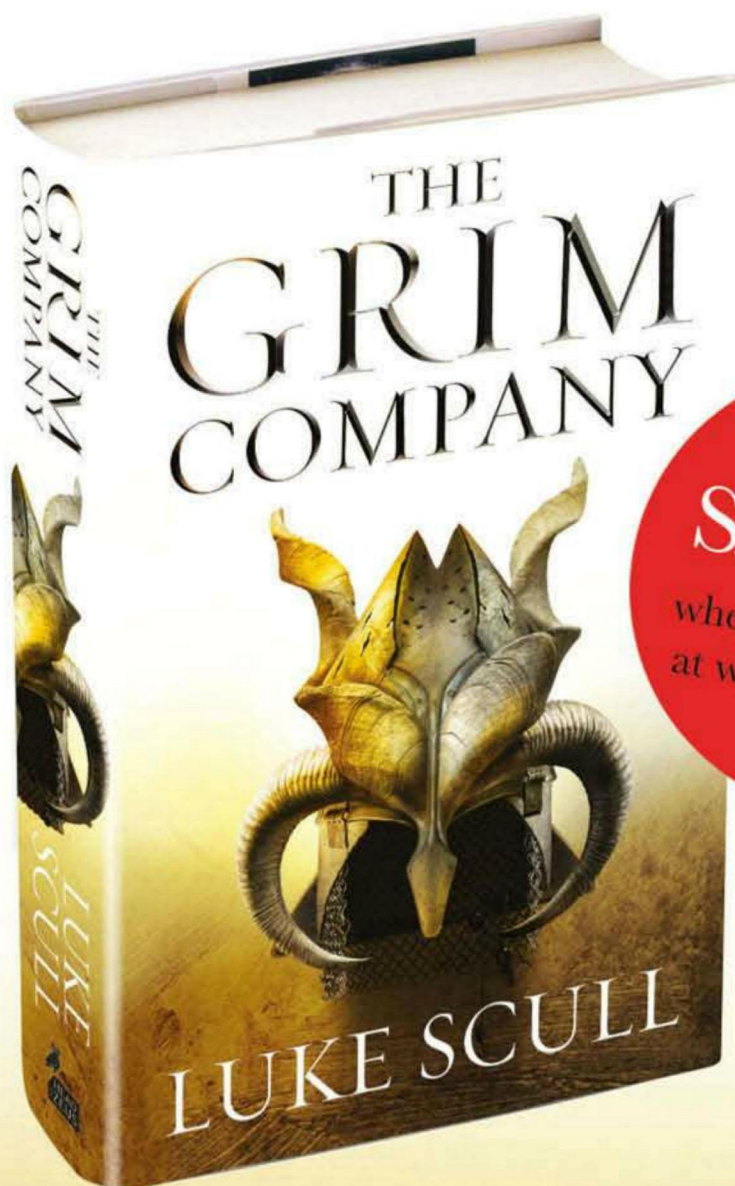
124 PAGES OF SCI-FI AND FANTASY TELLY

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A wondrous land whose boundaries are that of imagination...

Rod Serling was referring to *The Twilight Zone* in the introduction to his iconic show, but he could have just as easily been talking about sci-fi TV as a whole. In a genre whose lifeblood is ideas, the small screen has always been a breeding ground for creativity, an exciting place where exploring strange new worlds simply feels like the right thing to do.

So while cinema has traditionally edged out TV in terms of spectacle (though the playing field is levelling out), telly can do things the movies can only dream of. There's the increased level of intimacy, for starters – you get attached to the humans, aliens, robots and monsters you invite into your home every week in a way that's impossible even in the most beloved of movie franchises. But more importantly, television is a storyteller's medium, where plotlines can be explored over the course of weeks and months rather than being limited to a single sitting. It's the reason the DVD box set is one of the greatest inventions of the late 20th century. Why torture yourself waiting a week for the next instalment of the story when you can get your fix in one go? Who cares about work in the morning? It's only one more episode...

This *SFX Special Edition* is a big damn celebration of science fiction and fantasy on the small screen. Guided by the tried-and-tested tool that is the alphabet, we'll take you on an adventure through television old and new, looking at genre classics (*Star Trek*, *Doctor Who*, *Blake's 7*), current hits (*Merlin*, *Fringe*, *Arrow*), and even some shows you haven't seen yet (*Da Vinci's Demons*, *Defiance*, *Zero Hour*). We've explored great opening credits, learned how to make a geek audience laugh, plotted the history of the universe according to sci-fi, and loads more besides.

So turn off the TV for a moment and dive straight in. Thanks to the wonders of technology, your favourite shows will still be waiting for you when you're done.

Rich

Richard Edwards
Editor, *The A-Z Of Sci-Fi TV*

THE A-Z OF SCI-FI TV

SPECIAL **SFX** EDITION

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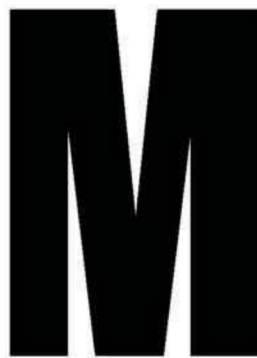
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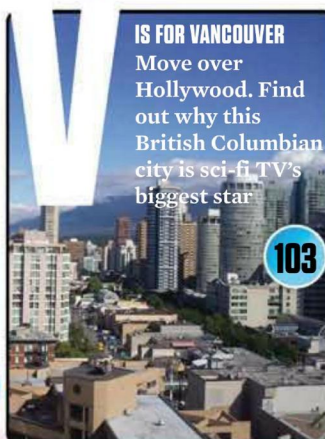
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The A-Z Of Sci-Fi TV

Future Publishing Ltd: 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, BA1 2BW
Email: sfx@futurenet.co.uk Web: www.sfx.co.uk

EDITORIAL

Editor: Richard Edwards, richard.edwards@futurenet.com
Deputy Editor: Rob Power, rob.power@futurenet.com
Art Editor: Mark Mitchell, mark.mitchell@futurenet.com
Production Editor: Andrea Ball, andrea.ball@futurenet.com
SFX Editor-in-Chief: Dave Bradley, david.bradley@futurenet.com
SFX Art Editor: Jonathan Coates, jonathan.coates@futurenet.com

CONTRIBUTORS

Ian Berriman, Tara Bennett, Sarah Dobbs, Jordan Farley, Dave Golder, Solomon C Gwynnatter, Tom Hawker, Steve Jarratt, Stephen Jewell, Russell Lewin, Joseph McCabe, Jayne Nelson, Steve O'Brien, Will Salmon, Nick Setchfield, David West

ADDITIONAL LAYOUT

Mark Critchell

ILLUSTRATIONS

Paul Garner

Thanks to:

Kyla Jardine, Catherine Kirkpatrick, Charlotte Martyn, Nicole Smith

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ADVERTISING

Advertising Manager: Adrian Hill
01225 442244, adrian.hill@futurenet.com
Advertising Sales Director: Nick Weatherall
020 7042 4155, nick.weatherall@futurenet.com
Digital Ad Manager: Andrew Church
020 7042 4237, andrew.church@futurenet.com

MARKETING AND SUBSCRIPTIONS

Group Marketing Manager: Entertainment: Sam Wight
sam.wight@futurenet.com

Marketing Executive: Entertainment: Tilly Michell
tilly.michell@futurenet.com

Marketing Executive: Antonella Matia
antonella.mattia@futurenet.com

Direct Marketing: Ashley Hickman
ashley.hickman@futurenet.com

CIRCULATION AND LICENSING

Trade Marketing Manager: Jonathan Beeson
jonathan.beeson@futurenet.com

International Export Account Manager: Michael Peacock
+44(0)1225 732316, michael.peacock@futurenet.com

Licensing And Syndication Director: Regina Erak
regina.erak@futurenet.com

Head Of Circulation: James Whitaker
james.whitaker@futurenet.com

PRINT AND PRODUCTION

Production Controller: Keely Miller
keely.miller@futurenet.com

Paper Controller: Lorraine Rees
lorraine.rees@futurenet.com

Advertising Production Coordinator: Gemma O'Riordan
gemma.o'riordan@futurenet.com

THE SENIOR PARTNERS

Creative Director: Bob Abbott

Editorial Director: Jim Douglas

Head of Entertainment Group: Clair Porteous

Group Publishing Director: Nial Ferguson

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Phone our UK hotline on: 0844 848 2852

Phone our international hotline on: +44 (0)1604 251 045

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Chief Executive Mark Wood
Non-executive Chairman Peter Allen
Group Finance Director Graham Harding
Tel: +44 (0)207 042 4000 (London)
Tel: +44 (0)1225 442 244 (Bath)

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Anderson (Gerry)

Looking back at the sci-fi CV of a true genre great

Words • Steve O'Brien

Torchy The Battery Boy (1960)

THE PITCH

The adventures of a doll named Torchy, so named because he has a lamp in his head.

Gerry Anderson's baby steps into the world of marionette telly was with the crude-looking, by his later standards anyway, *Adventures Of Twizzle* in 1957. Three years later, he teamed up again with *Twizzle* creator Roberta Leigh for this second puppet effort. Aided by a budget nearly twice the size of *Twizzle* (which was paltry, even by 1950s standards, at £450 per episode), *Torchy The Battery Boy* is a marked improvement on its rickety predecessor. The wires are thinner (though still wincingly visible), the mouths move more authentically and the sets, courtesy of long-term Anderson collaborator Reg Hill, noticeably more sophisticated. But it's still toddlers' stuff, with none of whizz and thrust of proper Anderson.

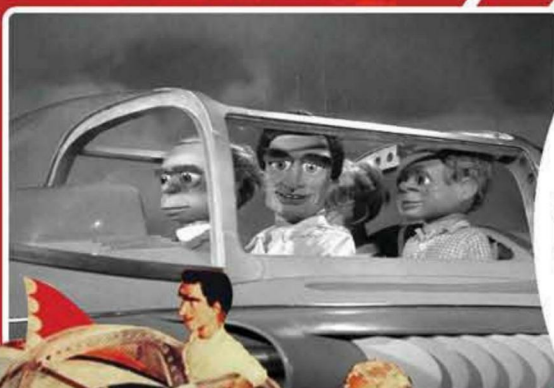
DID YOU KNOW?

Roberta Leigh, who created *Twizzle* and *Torchy*, is now 85 and still writing children's fiction.



He came in handy when the miners went on strike.

Supercar (1961-62)



THE PITCH

The adventures of Mike Mercury and his amazing Supercar!

Supercar is the first Anderson series to carry the "Supermarionation" caption, a giddily melodramatic name for what was essentially posh marionette puppets. Most of the famous Anderson tropes that would later become his trademark begin to reveal themselves in *Supercar*; the explosive launch sequences, the fetishistic love of sleekly designed hardware, the handsome hero with the Mid-Atlantic accent, and a central gang of characters with at least one annoying and supposedly humorous animal, in this case the ever-kickable Mitch the Monkey.

DID YOU KNOW?

Anderson claimed later that he invented *Supercar* as an excuse to reduce the amount of walking the puppets had to do.



Robert the Robot: a sort of forerunner of Otto in *Airplane!*.



Fireball XL5 (1962-63)

THE PITCH

The adventures of Colonel Steve Zodiac of the World Space Patrol, and his crew: Venus, Professor Matic and Robert the Robot.

With the space race in full, GDP-draining swing, *Fireball XL5* was the series that really got Gerry Anderson noticed. Even to this day, it's the only one of his series to run on a US network and, despite its monochrome clothing, it looked glossy enough that even ITV was repeating it well into the 1980s. Derek Meddings' effects work still impresses, as does Barry Gray's annoyingly catchy theme song, "I Wish I Was A Spaceman".

DID YOU KNOW?

Robert the Robot was voiced by Anderson himself.

Stingray (1964-65)

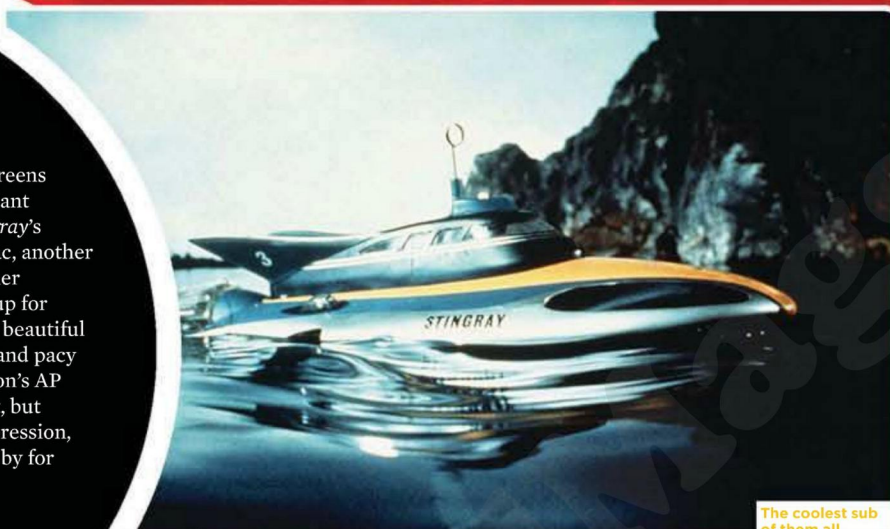
THE PITCH

In 2065, Troy Tempest is the pilot of Stingray, the World Aquanaut Security Patrol's most sophisticated submarine.

This is where it really starts. Crashing onto TV screens in 1964 in eye-dazzling Videocolor (another brilliant nonsense word from the Anderson stable), *Stingray*'s James Garner-styled hero was, after Steve Zodiac, another heartthrob doll, and the mute Marina (all together now: "Marina... Aqua-Marina...!") a smokey-eyed pin-up for adolescent boys and weird adults. Stingray itself was a beautiful piece of hardware design, and the show's lush visuals and pacy scripts were another massive quality jump for Anderson's AP Films. Don Mason was the voice behind Troy Tempest, but Ray Barrett's Commander Shore made the biggest impression, opening each episode with the immortal cry of "Stand by for action! Anything could happen in the next half hour!"

DID YOU KNOW?

Although Marina never spoke, her "voice" is heard once in a dream sequence in the episode "Raptures Of The Deep", provided by Sylvia Anderson.



The coolest sub of them all.



Titan was the fishy villain.

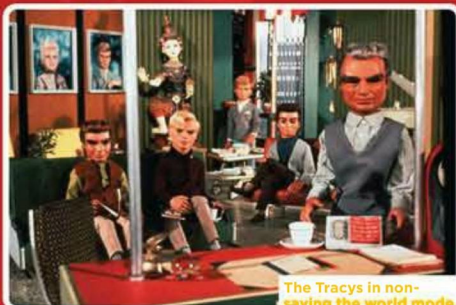


Marina (just about) kept her trap shut for the whole series.

Thunderbirds (1965-66)



Virgil Tracy: one of the boys in blue.



The Tracys in non-saving the world mode.



Hands up if you had the toy of this one.

THE PITCH

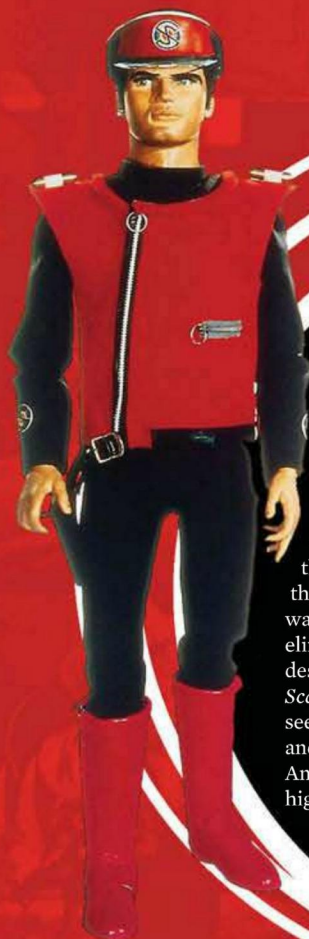
Jeff Tracy and his five sons are International Rescue, flying across the globe helping people in grave danger, with their plans often thwarted by the villainous Hood!

Though Anderson never lost his distaste for working with puppets, their limitations never boxed him into thinking small. *Thunderbirds*, with its 50-minute long episodes and relentless, cinematically staged action, wore its ambitions boldly on its sleeve. A family of matinee idol hunks and a silkily sexy siren in the shape of Lady Penelope meant this had appeal way beyond the playground. The idyllic and tech-saturated Tracy Island gave *Thunderbirds* a touch of cloudless Bond-like glamour, and the series was blessed with colourful supporting characters, including Lady P's cockney ex-con chauffeur Parker, the geeky, bookish Brains and the exotic Tin-Tin. ITC supremo Lew Grade (who viewed the first episode and exclaimed, "That's not a television series! That's a feature film!") had enough faith in *Thunderbirds* to schedule it in an early evening slot, and proof of its iconic power was still there in 1992, when Tracy Island became one of the year's best-selling toys on the back of BBC Two's ecstatically received rerun of the series.

DID YOU KNOW?

Fenella Fielding was Gerry Anderson's first choice as the voice of the elegantly regal Lady Penelope, but turned it down. His wife Sylvia eventually nabbed the job.

Captain Scarlet And The Mysterons (1967-68)



THE PITCH

In 2068, Earth is under attack from a race of Martians known as the Mysterons. Battling them is Spectrum and their top agent, the indestructible Captain Scarlet.

If *Thunderbirds* was an attempt to embrace not just the kiddies, but the teens and parents as well, *Captain Scarlet* was the first Anderson series that deliberately froze out the under-tens. Darker, moodier and more sophisticated than any of his previous shows – and wisely back down to half-hour instalments – *Captain Scarlet* is also notable for the new style of puppets Anderson was using. By relocating the machinery that operated the face inside the body, Anderson was able to create puppets that looked astonishingly lifelike, eliminating the disproportionately large head of the previous design. Some traditionalists moaned, but for others it gave *Captain Scarlet And The Mysterons* an even greater level of reality, and seemed a world and a moon away from the toddler play of *Twizzle* and *Torchy*. Although *Thunderbirds* remains the public favourite, Anderson devotees usually name *Captain Scarlet* as the real career high point.

DID YOU KNOW?

Francis Matthews, who voiced Captain Scarlet, based his performance on Cary Grant.



Nothing like an inconspicuous vehicle.

"Captain Scarlet was the first Anderson series that deliberately froze out the under-tens"

Joe 90 (1968-69)



A sort of early Wesley Crusher.

THE PITCH

Nine-year-old Joe McClaine is a schoolboy by day and secret agent at night, thanks to his stepfather's machine that can turn Joe into an instant expert in anything.

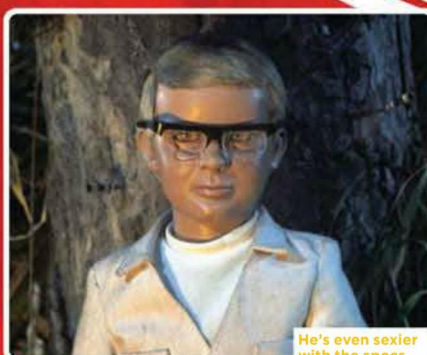
After the tough, death-drenched world of *Captain Scarlet*, *Joe 90* seemed a trifle slight. More intimate in scale than anything he had done in years, and almost totally devoid of the marketable hardware that had become such a reliable trope of Brand Gerry, *Joe 90* didn't quite capture the public imagination like most of his series. Maybe part of it was that Anderson's creative grip on *Joe 90* was the loosest on any of his shows (the day-to-day producer's job was filled instead by Reg Hill and David Lane), or maybe it was that Anderson's built-in child audience preferred watching adult characters as opposed to kids on screen. After the macho sophistication of *Captain Scarlet*, *Joe 90* was a significant backwards banana fall for Gerry Anderson. But nobody could have guessed what was coming next, not even Joe himself...

DID YOU KNOW?

Rupert Davies, who voiced Joe's dad, Professor Ian McClaine, was one of the biggest stars on television in the 1960s as the star of *Maigret*, yet he died penniless in 1976.



In those days, these were everywhere.



He's even sexier with the specs.

"After the sophistication of *Captain Scarlet*, *Joe 90* was a significant backwards banana fall for Anderson"

The Secret Service (1969)



"Come back! I'm not weird!"

THE PITCH

Father Stanley Unwin is an eccentric priest, secretly working for BISHOP, a branch of British Intelligence. Just imagine if Powell and Pressburger had directed a Bond film...

Stanley Unwin was a comedian in the late throes of middle age, famous in the 1960s for his unique brand of gobbledegook, labelled "Unwinese" by the man himself. Not a guy you'd have thought likely to follow in the footsteps of such square-jawed heartbreakers as Steve Zodiac, Troy Tempest and Virgil Tracy by headlining a Gerry Anderson series. *The Secret Service* was an odd fusion of live-action and puppetry, with a curiously low-key premise that proved a fatal turn-off for most TV networks, who didn't even bother to schedule it. The decision to place the puppets in real-life locations oddly enough compromised its sense of reality. Unwin's nonsense talk (which was always an acquired taste anyway) put off many – including, crucially, Lew Grade, the man brandishing the purse strings. He swiftly axed this most British of Anderson's series after only 13 episodes, fearing American audiences would be bamboozled by its lead character.

DID YOU KNOW?

Given *The Secret Service*'s lack of airtime on British TV, Stanley Unwin is still best known for his turn narrating the song "Happiness Stan" on side two of The Small Faces' seminal '60s LP *Ogdens' Nut Gone Flake*.

UFO (1970-71)



There's nowt wrong with purple hair, lad.

THE PITCH

In a futuristic 1980, SHADO (that's Supreme Headquarters, Alien Defence Organisation to you and me) help protect the planet from green-skinned, liquid-breathing aliens, intent on harvesting our bodies.

Anderson's first foray into live-action telly (though he'd produced two puppet-less movies by this point – the B-movie *Crossroads To Crime* in 1960 and the SF drama *Doppelgänger* in 1969) is in some ways a return to first principles after the wayward experiments of *Joe 90* and *The Secret Service*. Apart from the fact that these characters are able to walk through doors without getting their strings caught, this looks and feels like a classic Anderson show. The series offered up a saliva-generating array of hardware, including atomic submarines, a wildly impressive moonbase and various Interceptor aircraft, and boasted handsome production values. *UFO* was Anderson's most adult series to date, exemplified by the fact that four of its episodes were pushed into the late-night schedules, with one – an acid-drenched journey into the surreal titled "The Long Sleep" – banned totally by some ITV regions.

DID YOU KNOW?

In the early episodes, Ed Bishop's hair was bleached for his role as Ed Straker, but to avoid follicle damage, this was switched to a wig later on.



That's Sherlock's mum on the left.



"Yes, this new VCR is really the tops!"

Space: 1999 (1975-77)

THE PITCH

On 13 September 1999 a sudden surge of magnetic radiation detonates lunar waste, hurling the Moon out of Earth's orbit and into a black sun from where it finally emerges hundreds of light years from our own galaxy.

Anderson exhumed his original plans for *UFO*'s second season – which was due to be refashioned *UFO: 1999*, relocating the series to its moonbase – for this series, which remains one of his most cherished. With a budget of £3.5 million, it was in its day the most expensive British series ever made, but it's one that took its toll on Gerry Anderson's marriage. Sylvia, who had been so instrumental in all of her husband's series since the earliest days, walked, ending a 15-year relationship and a golden period for the Anderson brand. Real-life couple Martin Landau and Barbara Bain were Commander John Koenig and Doctor Helena Russell, not a husband and wife over-blessed with charisma, but then they were foisted on the Andersons by Abe Mandell of the American arm of ITC. As is usual with Anderson series, the characterisation and acting was weak, but the production values and design were exemplary. The first season is the better of the two, with Mandell bringing in *Star Trek* producer Fred Freiberger (over Anderson's head, it must said) to lighten up what was perceived as a pretty dour show, but the rejigged *Space: 1999* still failed to seduce American audiences. A planned third season never happened, but ITV, alongside HDFILMS, are now readying a reboot, titled *Space: 2099*. Watch this space (no pun intended)...

DID YOU KNOW?

Gerry Anderson's first choice for Commander Koenig was *I Spy* actor Robert Culp. But Anderson went cold on the actor after he apparently told Gerry, "There's something I have to tell you. I want you to know that I'm a great actor. Something else you should know is that I'm an even better director and an even better writer." Ooh, get her.



Martin Landau and his wife Barbara.



Martin Landau and not his wife Barbara.



Terrahawks (1983-86)

THE PITCH

In the year 2020, the Terrahawks are a taskforce responsible for protecting Earth from invasion by a group of extraterrestrial androids and aliens led by the evil, and shockingly haired Zelda.

Anderson's first puppet series in well over a decade is one that's hard to love. Pitched at a younger demographic than his most lovebombed shows, it's a tatty-looking series, employing new latex puppets, as opposed to the old electrically augmented Supermarionation ones, which don't lend themselves to creating characters with any great beauty. After the chiselled handsomeness of Steve Zodiac and the It girl allure of Harmony Angel, *Terrahawks'* leads look like John Nettles and Judy Finnigan.

DID YOU KNOW?

One of the songs that Kate Kestrel sings in the show is called "SOS Mr Tracy", a clear reference to *Thunderbirds*.

Space Precinct (1994-95)

THE PITCH

In the year 2040, former NYPD detective Patrick Brogan, now a lieutenant with the Demeter City police force on the planet Altor in the Epsilon Eridani system, tackles crime perpetrated not just by humans, BUT BY ALIENS!

Space Precinct began life a decade earlier as *Space Police*, a pilot which headlined Anderson stalwart Shane Rimmer as an older, craggier Detective Brogan, but which failed to sell. By 1994, with overseas money in the coffers and *Knots Landing* actor Ted Shackleford now in place, the series was go. An awkward mix of space opera and police procedural, *Space Precinct* had the appearance of a comedy show, but was stiffly serious. Airing at a time when the Rick Berman-era *Star Trek* franchise was on a golden roll, *Space Precinct* looks cheesy and old-fashioned, a unsatisfying Euro-pudding from a different telly age.

DID YOU KNOW?

The main reason for the change of title from *Space Police* to *Space Precinct* was that Lego objected to the use of *Space Police*, which it was using for a line of toys.

Dick Spanner, PI (1986)

THE PITCH

Police Squad-style stop-motion noir parody about a robotic PI.

It may have sold itself as a Gerry Anderson project, but *Dick Spanner* was really the baby of comedy writer Terry Adlam, who roped in Anderson for production duties for this series of six-minute episodes that aired as part of Channel Four's Janet Street Porter-birthed Network 7.

DID YOU KNOW?

In 2007, it was reported in a number of British newspapers that Anderson was on the lookout for the original Dick Spanner puppet, which had last been seen in the possession of "Clive", a man who had worked on the show. This was later revealed to be a publicity stunt to promote the DVD release.

Gerry Anderson's New Captain Scarlet (2005)

THE PITCH

Same as before, but faster, and in CGI!

It's fitting that Gerry Anderson's last series would be both a return to his roots as well as a full embrace of computer technology. Just as he'd been at the forefront of television wizardry in the 1960s, here he was in 2005, revisiting possibly his greatest series, but using state-of-the-art technology to recreate it.

Mucked about by a disinterested ITV, that cut the episodes in half and screened them as part of a longer show on Saturday mornings – *The Ministry of Mayhem*, really? – *New Captain Scarlet* can possibly lay claim to being Gerry Anderson's greatest ever show, a fact most people might have agreed on, had they actually seen it. Faster, slicker and glossier than the puppet version, it was still surprisingly faithful, though early plans to have Francis Matthews, then 78, to return to voice the Captain, were wisely shelved. Phil Ford, later one of the main scribes on *The Sarah Jane Adventures*, wrote the lion's share of the episodes.

DID YOU KNOW?

Test footage for a CGI *Captain Scarlet* was completed in 1999, with Francis Matthew and Ed Bishop recreating the roles of Captain Scarlet and Captain Blue respectively.

Torchy The Battery Boy, *Supercar*, *Fireball XL5*, *The Secret Service* and *Space: 1999* are available on DVD courtesy of Network Distributing (www.networkonair.com). *Stingray*, *Thunderbirds*, *Captain Scarlet*, *Joe 90* and *UFO* are distributed by ITV Studios Home Entertainment. *Terrahawks* is distributed by Revelation Films.



Bromance

EXCLUSIVE
INTERVIEWS!

Words • Jordan Farley

Han & Chewie, Batman & Robin, Spock & Kirk... Sci-fi and fantasy is full of great double acts, and Arthur & Merlin can hold their own with the best of them

Double acts have occupied a special place throughout narrative history – from the gravediggers in *Hamlet* to Kenan and Kel in, er, *Kenan & Kel*. But one double act looms large over modern science fiction and fantasy television, a double act that's actually centuries old – Arthur and Merlin.

What makes their pairing over five series of the Beeb's smash hit *Merlin* the stuff of legend, is that it was able to breathe new life into a relationship that has remained largely unchanged throughout hundreds, if not thousands, of incarnations. As portrayed by Colin Morgan and Bradley James, young Merlin and Arthur are best friends, though you wouldn't know it from the way they treat each other.

"They started off as... not enemies in

a 'fight to the death' kind of sense, but not liking each other," says James, who has played Arthur since the series first aired in 2008.

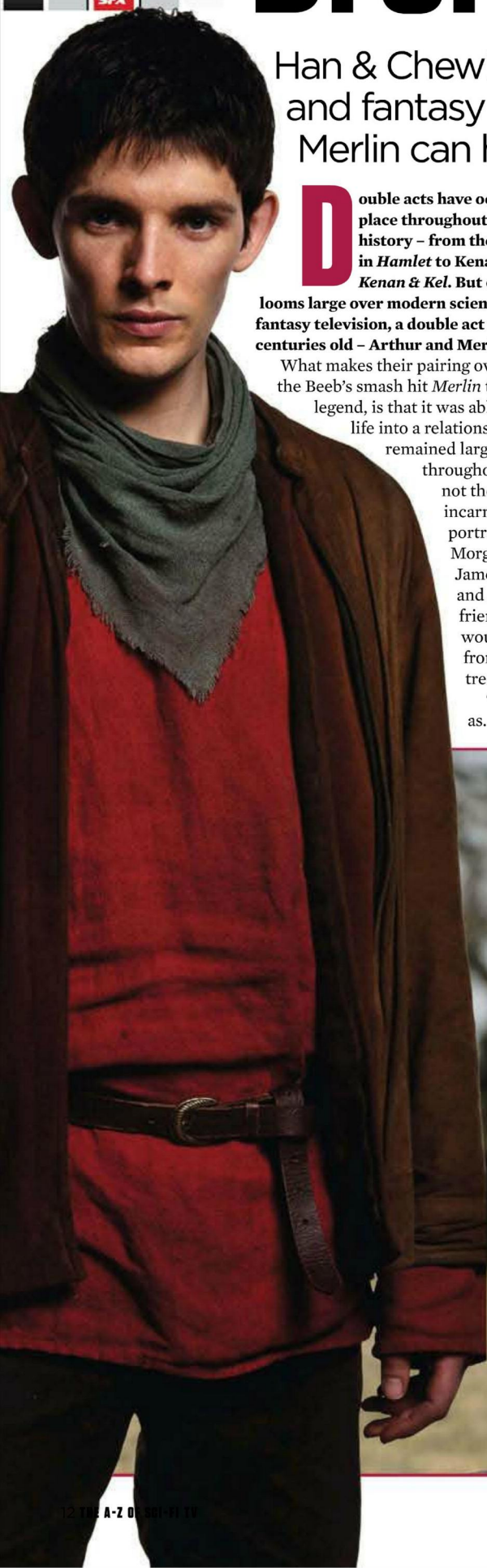
"It's completely turned around from that as they've found themselves in all these quite extraordinary situations together and having to learn more about each other and finding out they get on, in a slightly unorthodox way. Now in series five, Arthur is king and Merlin is, unofficially, his lead advisor."

Morgan meanwhile sees their polar-opposite upbringing as part of the reason why the bond between them has become so unbreakable. "At the beginning it was very much two guys from very different worlds: Arthur being from a royal family and Merlin coming from a very humble background. So they are complete opposites who are forced to work towards the same end. What's interesting is that throughout the series they've found in their differences what it is that clicks with them, and they probably can't articulate it.

"Sometimes I find it hard to articulate what it could be but, at the end of the day, it's a friendship, it's two guys put in an impossible situation – Arthur knows he has to be king, Merlin knows he has to do anything he can to make him that king. The fact that they've been friends along the way is a bit of a bonus."

OPPOSITES ATTRACT

James also sees, in their differences, the reason for their closeness. "The difference is whether Merlin has the leadership qualities that Arthur has. The two of them combined are able to create this kingdom that everyone's been raving about. I think that's why they are two sides of the same coin.



Merlin: magical man of mystery.



I'm quoting the dragon here. I didn't realise I'd listened to him that much – he's clearly been saying some wise things!"

In a cast that boasts one of the best ensembles on TV, it's Arthur and Merlin who have become key to the show's continuing success. Whereas Morgana has departed Camelot and Guinevere has moved in, the relationship between Arthur and Merlin has remained almost completely free of similarly momentous shifts. The writers hit on a winning formula on day one, and have been smart enough not to tinker with it ever since.

"Until he can accept Merlin's magical powers, there's always going to be that boundary preventing them ever being equals," says James. "There's also a master/servant barrier that's there. It's difficult to get past that because I have friends who I've known from a young age who I still see as 'that friend I knew a long time ago', as opposed to who they are now – a family man or whatever. We still hang out and act like we're teenagers, so that dynamic will always probably be present with Arthur and Merlin, because that's how you form better relationships in the first place."

Morgan echoes a similar sentiment. "One of the key things that works really well about the Arthur and Merlin relationship is that no matter what, their relationship is the same. Their circumstances change and the circumstances under which they have to survive are different – but essentially they're still good mates."

"I know 30, 40, 50-year-olds who've known each other from when they were young and they still talk how they did when they were young. They still use all these silly jokes that they used to have, and I very much imagine that's what Arthur and Merlin will be like, because that's what friends do. That's why people are friends – good friends – because you find an ease with people, an ease in which you can be yourself. The only problem is that Merlin can't quite do that."

Merlin can't quite do that because, as with any good dramatic double act, you need tension. And the real tension in Merlin and Arthur's relationship doesn't stem from whether Merlin's polished Arthur's armour adequately, it's the constant fear that one day Merlin's magical secret could be outed.

The real tension in their relationship stems from the constant fear that Merlin's magical secret could be outed



Arthur leads, Merlin follows.

It's a threat especially palpable in the latest series, where Merlin's mortal rival Mordred has wormed his way back into their lives.

"The fear is that Arthur has always viewed magic as a threat, something bigger and more powerful than him," Morgan says. "Merlin recognises that, so for Merlin to say he has magic would cause a status shift. Merlin is more powerful than him, but he doesn't want to risk revealing that. Arthur needs to believe he is the most powerful man there has ever been and that's why the series works – the audience is in on the secret.

"There are a lot of episodes this series in which you see Merlin testing the water in that respect. In a way he has to put himself in the background, he has to play the fool and be the most unsuspecting person ever if he has to do what he has to do."

Merlin may be playing the fool, but who's the real fool if, after five seasons, Arthur still hasn't twigged Merlin's magical secret?

"I sort of forgive Arthur due to the fact he gets knocked unconscious so many times, I'm pretty sure he's suffering from brain damage," James says. "He's pretty sharp considering the battering he's taken over the years!

"The relationship was something we spoke about early on – we wanted

"We laugh a lot. We've joked a lot over the last five years and that's probably carried over onto the screen"

to hit the right notes," James continues. But as the show has become darker, has keeping the playful side of their friendship become a challenge?

"Not so much a challenge. I think the show needed to develop and grow up, and it has done. What the scriptwriters have done is maintain that relationship between the two of them. They won't interact too differently. There's a great scene in *Butch Cassidy And The Sundance Kid* – the end scene where they're sat in that little hut in Mexico – and they're joking, despite the fact that as soon as they walk out of the door they're going to be riddled with bullets. They still have that sense of humour, they don't suddenly become all morose because impending doom is just around the corner, and I think that's very much the case with Arthur and Merlin."

PERFECT FIT

Arthur and Merlin's popularity as a small-screen pairing would never have reached the heights it has, however, if it hadn't been for Merlin's casting department. "Chemistry" is a nebulous, generally overused word, but Bradley James and Colin Morgan are unquestionably perfect for their parts and share a camaraderie that translates onto the screen completely intact.

"We laugh a lot," says James. "I don't tend to order him around or make him clean my costume or anything like that. We've joked a lot over the last five years and that's probably carried over onto the screen for certain elements of the relationship between Arthur and Merlin."

All that's well and good, but you really know you've made it as a bromance for the ages when fans start writing their own fiction about you.

"I absolutely stay away from that with a barge pole!" says Morgan, emphatically. And who can blame him! 🍷



Camelot's own band of brothers.

Merlin's fifth series is currently airing on BBC One on Saturday nights. Series Five: Part One (episodes 1-6) is out on DVD now. Series Five: Part Two and the Complete Series Five DVD/Blu-ray are released on Monday 21 January by Freemantle Media Enterprises.

True Bromance

Five innocent Merlin moments that might get fans hot under the collar

1

MERLIN AND ARTHUR PART WAYS 1.10 "The Moment Of Truth"

When Merlin discovers his mother is in danger he does what any good son would do and leaves to help her. Merlin and Arthur's (shortlived) farewell on the balcony of Camelot castle was an early indicator that the duo were going to be friends.



2

ARTHUR GOES TOPLESS 3.01 "The Tears Of Uther Pendragon"

What could have been a perfectly innocent moment of light relief in the series three opener was left loaded with the potential for misinterpretation due to Arthur's inexplicable decision to take his shirt off halfway through the scene. He also gives Merlin's face a bit of a wash. Aw, how sweet.



3

MERLIN DROPS ARTHUR'S TROUSERS 4.04 "Aithusa"

Merlin needs a set of keys off Arthur's belt, so what better way to get them than by, er, magically dropping Arthur's trousers around his knees? Cue Merlin wrestling Arthur to the ground. If all of this hadn't been taking place in front of Arthur's council, things could have got a bit *Women In Love*.



4

MERLIN GOES FOR A WHIZ 4.03 "The Wicked Day"

Merlin pretends to go for a pee in the woods. "Unless you want to come and watch me..." he says. "Why would I want to watch you?" responds Arthur. That is a very good question...



5

FRIENDLY SLAPS AND HORSEPLAY 5.03 "The Death Song Of Uther Pendragon"

Merlin and Arthur are put through the emotional wringer this episode, but the pair end up in the castle, alone. As Merlin dresses Arthur, talk turns to friendly slaps and the leather gloves come out. Oo-er.





"He's nothing to do with me..."

Comedy

How do you write gags for a sci-fi savvy audience? *The Big Bang Theory* and *Community* writers explain

Words • Tara Bennett

It used to be that when TV comedies referred to geeks and nerds, they were always the tired punchline of a lazy pocket protector joke, the recipients of derisive snark from the "cooler" characters, or the weirdo support who served to make the lead look "normal". Geek bashing was sport, like virtual bullying – at the expense of a large chunk of the viewing audience.

Recent years have seen a noticeable shift, however, with the massive success of *The Big Bang Theory*, and the cult adoration of *Community*. Both shows celebrate their nerdy heroes, who let their intellectual and geek flags fly. Be it *TBBT*'s socially inept genius Dr Sheldon Cooper (multiple Emmy-winner Jim Parsons) with his unabashed superhero adoration, or *Community*'s

TV-obsessed über-geek Abed Nadir (Danny Pudi), both sitcoms feature off-kilter characters that unabashedly embrace their quirks and love of pop culture. In turn, they and the rest of the characters on their respective shows have become the new millennium's standard-bearers for the reassessment of geeks in the mainstream. And it's about time!

It doesn't hurt that self-professed geeks are at the helms of both shows – which translates into an authenticity that comes through in the nerdy comic book squabbles among Leonard and Sheldon's gang, or in the obsessive *Kick Punched* discussions shared by Troy and Abed.

Steven Molaro, *The Big Bang Theory* executive producer, tells *SFX* that he and his writers are what they write about. "I was an outcast nerd all through school," he professes, without shame. "I went to *Star Trek* conventions and sat lonely and quiet in the lunchroom. I love these things the way the characters do, so I get it. Yes, sometimes we walk the line of embracing it and poking fun at it, but hang out with a group of



Science smart, not fashion smart.



Dealing with important issues.

nerds – we make fun of each other. Nerds will also blast and hate on things that they love at the same time. It all goes hand-in-hand, but it all comes from a real place and we continue to live in that world in our everyday lives. It's not like we're sitting there being cool asking each other, 'What would a nerd think?' It's what we think they should say!"

Co-creator/executive producer Bill Prady agrees: "In terms of the nerd stuff, we're a pretty nerdy group. Yesterday in the writer's room we had a 30-minute discussion about whether or not having super speed would be boring."

Explain, sir! "Think about it. If you put a jigsaw puzzle in front of the Flash, he could put it together really fast but he still had to look at every piece and say, 'Okay, this is part of the border and this is part of the kitten,' so for him wouldn't it seem like a long time? So isn't it the world's most boring superpower? It's a stalemate because there's a proposal that super speed is accompanied by some Zen meditative state where you can detach your conscious mind. And then it was, 'Where's your proof or documentation of that?' That's the nature of our writer's room," he laughs.

But Prady is also quick to add that they don't pander or get sloppy with their



Troy and Abed in the caption.

"Both shows celebrate their nerdy heroes, who let their intellectual and geek flags fly"

science either. Since all of the main characters on *TBBT* are brilliant scientists at Caltech in Pasadena, the show was quick to enlist physicist David Saltzberg PhD from the start to vet their white boards, science talk and insults for a whole other level of reality. "We work very hard to make the science right, even though that's only noticed by a tiny group of people," says Prady proudly. "Whenever you watch people do what you do for a living on television, you always say, 'Oh, that's not how that works,' so we wanted to avoid that too."

While that level of scientific authenticity isn't needed on *Community*, the beloved sitcom about

a group of disparate students that meet and become a dysfunctional family of misfits at Greendale Community College, season four does find the show at a crossroads.

Created and fostered for three years by the brilliantly odd Dan Harmon before he was fired last summer, *Community* now finds itself led by brand new executive producers David Guarascio and Moses Port (*Aliens In America*, *Happy Endings*). So for *Community* fans anxiously awaiting the new season, there's an understandable worry that Harmon's meta sensibility and progressive storytelling (including the use of anything from stopmotion to 8-bit

videogame animation), will be wiped from the show with his exit.

In an exclusive chat with *SFX*, however, Guarascio and Port are keen to reassure fans that they don't have to fret about *Community* losing its geeky sensibility – because that's what made them fans of the show too.

"Our biggest concern was that we wanted the people who've super, super loved this show over the last three years to feel like it's still their show," Guarascio explains. "I think from that standpoint, and knowing you have to be singular in your goals to make a successful TV show, we took that as our overriding approach.

"What's so fun about it – and this is the strange way that the fans have really informed the sensibility of the show over the years – is it's created this sense of 'Let's all keep up'. So we don't want to slow down to explain anything and we feel confident we're still making a show that, if you pay attention, you'll get that much more out of – because we're pushing the boundaries."

GEEK GODS

For a series that's smartly parodied everything from *Goodfellas* to *Doctor Who* (with show within a show, *Inspector Spacetime*), Guarascio and Port say they are sticking to outside-the-box storytelling that remains grounded in character and narrative. In that vein audiences can expect to see geeky homages to *The Hunger Games* and even an *Inspector Spacetime* convention episode. According to Guarascio, the network and the studio were less than happy about the latter idea when it was first suggested.

"We understood their concerns," says Guarascio, "that it's too alienating for some people and it's not inclusive enough – but we were confident that we could do an episode that everyone would enjoy. If you really love the show, you're all the way inside and you understand *Inspector Spacetime*, you'll get it on a whole other level," he laughs.

"The show has always worked creatively in the past – Dan had to bulldoze through a lot of mountains to make the show he wanted – and that set the template for us. So we were able to push this through and say this is something we really need to do to be true to what the show is. Then we got to San Diego Comic-Con [in July] and decided to see what the fans thought."

"At that point, they were adamant that even the hardcore fans didn't want to see it because it was from last year," adds Port.

"So it was our greatest moment," Guarascio continues, "when people actually cheered [for the idea]. It was the moment when the studio and the network said, 'Okay, you're right. People



Drama in the Dreamatorium.

want this so go for it'. They understood where we were coming from when they saw that fan reaction. At that moment the fans were helping to choose the direction the show is going in."

The Big Bang Theory's sixth season is currently airing on CBS in the US, and will air on E4 in the UK. Community's fourth season will air on NBC in the US, date TBC. The show airs on Sony Entertainment Television in the UK.

"We wanted the people who've super, super loved *Community* to feel like it's still their show"



The cast of Community.



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Doctor Who



Matt Smith with Jenna-Louise Coleman.

With Amy and Rory gone and the Time Lord's 50th anniversary approaching, Steven Moffat talks past, present and future...

Words • Nick Setchfield

"I don't think I ever make any pretence at professionalism in this job," laughs Steven Moffat, asked if entering a Dalek-infested studio still has the power to reduce him to quivering fanboy mode.

As the show's 50th anniversary looms, you sense the *Who* supremo will have plenty more chances to feel that unique, TARDIS-powered rush. "I'm always terribly excited when I go on

set. I'm long past the idea that I've got to pretend to be reticent about it," he admits.

But he's not content to fall back on easy nostalgia when it comes to *Doctor Who*. "I certainly haven't found its limits," he tells *SFX*, preparing to share his thoughts on the recent past, near future and all the wibbly-wobbly points in between of Britain's reigning number one sci-fi show.



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You said goodbye to Karen Gillan (Amy) and Arthur Darvill (Rory) this series. What was their final day on set like, emotionally?

It was a weird one. Of course, as it turned out it wasn't quite the final day – as always happens they came back about a month later and shot some extra stuff. The ending is always a mess. But for a brief moment we had a really good final shot for them. On their last full-time day on *Doctor Who*, the very last shot they did was the three of them walking into the TARDIS together. And so that was good and proper and right. I suppose Karen and Arthur would have the bigger emotions about it, because the rest of us just carried on. The trouble with all these things is that it's like the last day of anything, it's exactly the same as all the other days. It's just tomorrow that's going to be different because they're not going to be there. It was a day on *Doctor Who*, behind schedule, fretting slightly, the director saying, "I'm going to do just one more shot and that's it," Marcus [Wilson, producer] saying, "Yes, but we really have to finish now..." So it's like every other day. And then it just stops.

Did you always have an ending in mind for the Ponds?

The thing that always bugged me – and I know that Russell [T Davies] stumbled against this too, but he handled it in different ways – was the Doctor would say, "Well, you're no longer going

to travel in the TARDIS with me." And that would be it, over. And that's just not what happens with people. When you stop sharing a flat with somebody it's not the case that you never see them again. You might see them the next night. You might see them more often. So given that the Doctor can go anywhere in the universe, why wouldn't he visit his friends, like any normal person? Socially, he's actually relatively normal – he likes company, he likes people to talk to. But the moment he's kicked them out of the TARDIS he simply never thinks about them again. Russell had to get one into a parallel universe, another one into UNIT, wipe another one's memory... because if you're trying to write these things honestly you'd just be saying, "Where are they?"

That always made the Doctor feel a little frightening and cold, in a way...

I think it is frightening and cold, and interesting for that reason. I just don't know that I quite believe it. I think he would pop up from



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"Given that the Doctor can go anywhere in the universe, why wouldn't he visit his friends, like any normal person?"

time to time. And it's so short a time for him that it wouldn't seem like a big deal. A friendship for the Doctor is just a postponed bereavement. He's going to outlive everybody, and I think that's quite an interesting thing to get into. It's inevitable – he's going to lose them. They're going to die. Whether or not they die in an adventure, as far as he's concerned that just means they'll die on Wednesday as opposed to Tuesday. He's going to outlive them, and move on past them. I would argue it's not so much cold of him that at a certain point he's not in touch – it's necessity, isn't it? Do they want him turning up when they're 80?

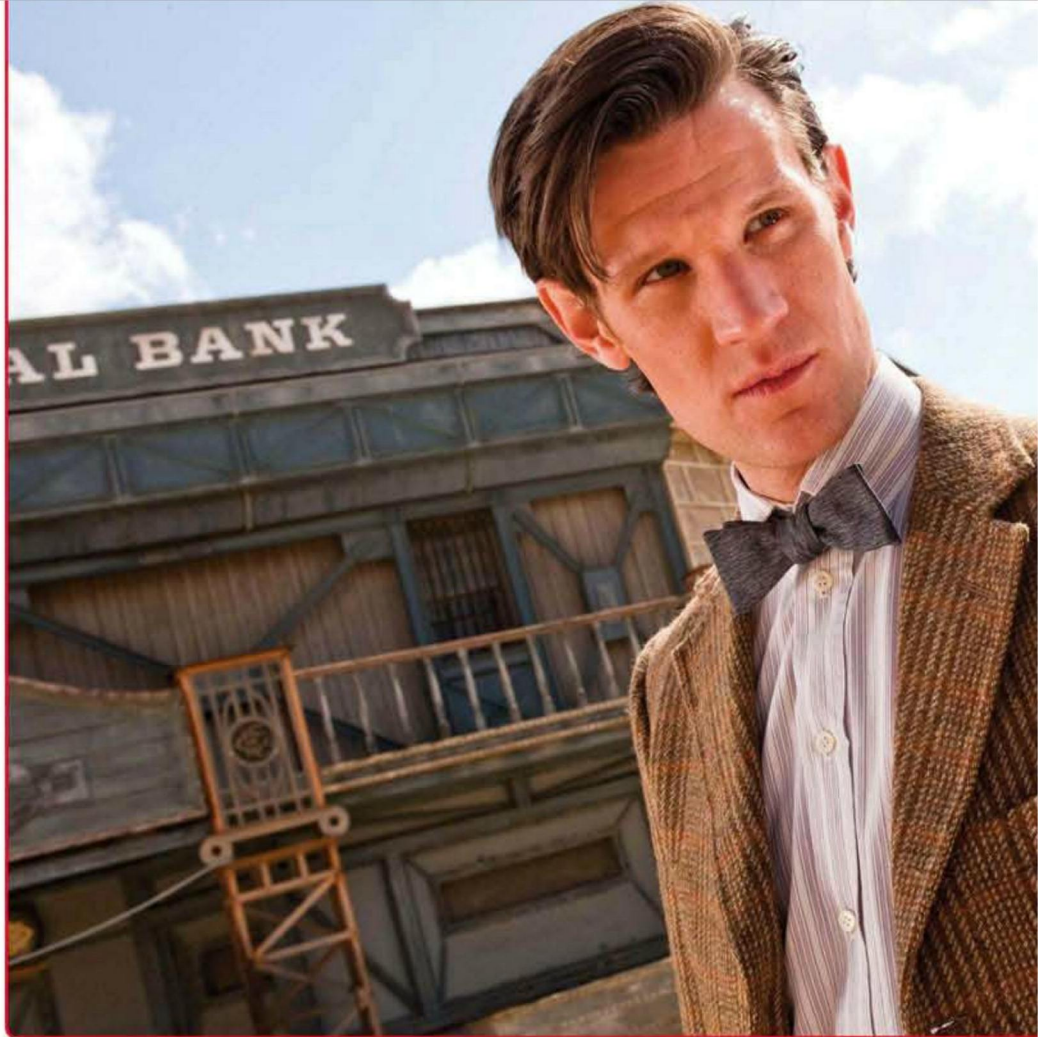
Did that inspire you to mention the Brigadier's passing in "The Wedding Of River Song"?

We had the horrible tragedy of Elisabeth Sladen and Nicholas Courtney dying in the same year. I don't think that there are many characters that you would feel obliged to do something for, but those are two of them. We had the caption for Elisabeth on "The Impossible Astronaut", but I didn't just want to repeat that so I thought I could build it into the show. It's a lovely idea that you should never ever kill the Brigadier, and have him always referred to off-screen, but part of me thinks that's a dramatic cheat. The absolute fact is that the vigorous young man the Doctor used to know will die of old age, and the Doctor will carry on being a vigorous young man. I think that's a fun thing to get into. He has to face up to endings from time to time.

You're tackling the question that's been hidden in plain sight for 50 years – "Doctor who?" How much have you hidden in plain sight over the past three years?

There's a fair amount, but I'm not going to say what because I'm quite enjoying them being hidden in plain sight. And some of the things you hide in plain sight you never use, because things

"A friendship for the Doctor is just a postponed bereavement. He's going to outlive everybody"



don't work out. I think we did rather well in the first year with the Doctor's jacket in the Angels episode where he comes back to talk to Amy and it looks like a continuity error, and we even cut it so that it looks like a continuity error, as though we were trying to hide the fact that he was wearing his jacket. And everybody thought it was a mistake. And then it turned out it wasn't a mistake at all – it was the Doctor from the future. That was cool.

When you mention something like the Fields of Trenzalore (from "The Wedding Of River Song") is that a placeholder for your imagination or do you know precisely what that is?

Not precisely, but I know what it's going to be. Yes, there's a long-term plan, but it's not like every detail of the story exists. If you had every detail of the story worked out in advance, it would be impossible – you'd have written them all simultaneously, you'd just stand in a room and dictate them. You'd also be very bored by the time you got to write it. So they're big building blocks. Yes, I know what I'm talking about, but the detail is pending.

Can you ever watch old *Doctor Who* for pleasure?

Yes. No problem at all. I can watch my own *Doctor Who* for pleasure! It takes a while. I had to watch "The Eleventh Hour" not long ago and I just really enjoyed it. It was cracking. I wondered who that young man playing the Doctor was...

So if your *Doctor Who* fell through a crack in time and was watched by 10-year-old Steven – who we see in that famous photograph engrossed in a copy of *Doctor Who And The Daleks* – what would that Steven make of it?



The Ponds: they will be missed...



Immortality - a double-edged sword.



The Doctor's next companion?

I think he'd love it, because I'm not sure I've changed that much... hopefully I've got better at writing. I just do the kind of *Doctor Who* that my 10-year-old self would have enjoyed. I'm making my 10-year-old self sound wildly different to my 50-year-old self, but there isn't that much of a distinction... I liked *Doctor Who* being clever, when there were episodes you had to figure out. So yes, I'd have enjoyed it - a good review from myself isn't much of a revelation but yes, I'd have been keen. And I'd have loved Matt... 🐶

Doctor Who returns to BBC One at Christmas.



Doctor How?

Unanswered questions from the *Whoniverse* - will they all be addressed in time for the 50th anniversary?

Who or what destroyed the TARDIS in "The Big Bang"?

And, connected, whose voice was saying, "Silence will fall" just before it exploded? Some have speculated that it was a Silent. There were certainly hints in "The Lodger" that there was a Silent (or maybe some Silents) on board the TARDIS at that time - there are a couple of moments when Amy seems to see something, then instantly forgets about it. Similarly, River never mentions that she heard the voice to the Doctor or anyone. Has she forgotten about it too? That, after all, is the Silents' MO. Then again, why would the Silents deliver River a chilling warning if they knew she'd forget it. That's crap villainy, that is.

But it's never been made clear if it's the Silents who do the deed. And there are more enticing possibilities. The Time Lords? The Doctor himself? Certainly, in the same story, the Daleks and the Cybermen say the Doctor will destroy the universe, which is effectively what blowing up the TARDIS does.

Why did the Silents' TARDIS in "The Impossible Astronaut" look like the faux-TARDIS in "The Lodger"?

Again, you have to consider that the Silents seemed to be hanging around in the peripheries in "The Lodger". And the pilot's corpse in "The Lodger" did have four fingers, like the Silents. So was the crashed ship in "The Lodger" actually a Silent ship. Were there Silents on the TARDIS studying how to make their own TARDIS?

Why had the Silents built a huge network of tunnels under the Earth in "The Impossible Astronaut"?

The answer to this could be as mundane as "they needed somewhere to live", but there seemed to be more to it than that. And why had they built a TARDIS down there? They must have had some kind of plan. Or maybe they just really like TARDIS-console shaped conversation pieces for furniture.

What is the answer to the First Question?

"On the Fields of Trenzalore, at the fall of the Eleventh, when no creature can speak falsely or fail to answer, a question will be asked - a question that must never be answered." So Dorium Maldovar told the Doctor. We now know the question is "Doctor who?". But what could be the answer?

How will Oswin return?

After our unexpected introduction to Oswin Oswald in "Asylum Of The Daleks" on the Alaska, we then got thrown the curveball that she'd been turned into a Dalek. So how's Moffat going to play with time and space to turn her into a fully-fledged companion this Christmas? (Of course, that's assuming the new companion is actually Oswin, and not just a very convincing doppelganger.)

Will we ever discover why Captain Jack Harkness had a gap in his memory?

This may seem like aeons ago now, but it was a mystery introduced by Moffat in "The Empty Child" that was never solved. Maybe he just had a really bad hangover.

Who was that mysterious woman with the Time Lords in "The End Of Time"?

The Doctor's mother? Romana? A future Doctor? A mad old cat lady? If it is the Doctor's mother she might know the answer to "Doctor Who?"

What happened to that pirate who left the room and was never seen again in "The Curse Of The Black Spot"?

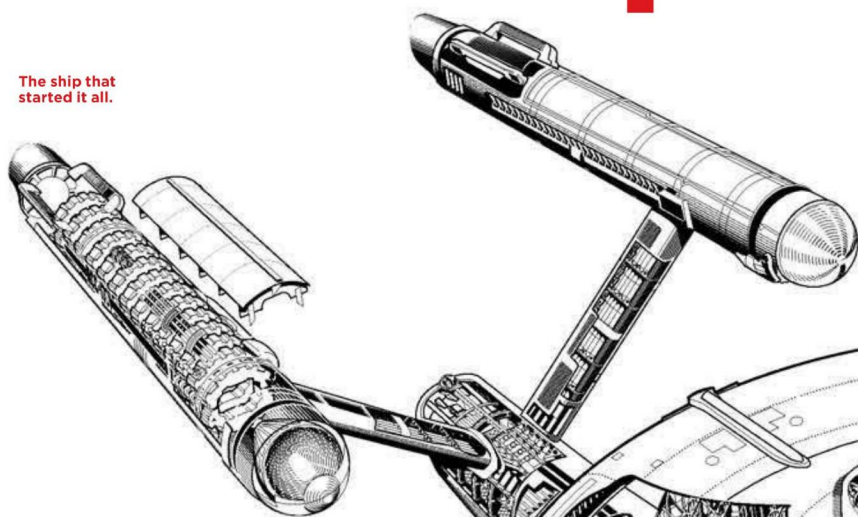
Do you really care?



Enterprise

Words • Joseph McCabe

The ship that started it all.



We beam aboard TV's most famous starship for a lesson in designing the future

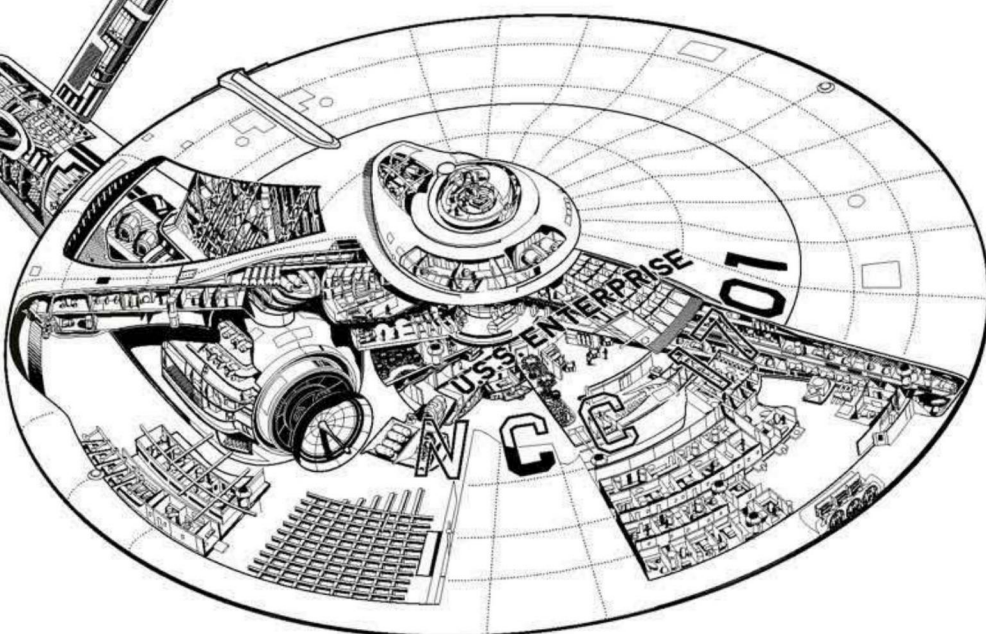
Few images in sci-fi are as iconic as the white streak of the USS Enterprise slicing through the infinite blackness of space. The United Federation Of Planets' flagship vessel NCC-1701 has fired the imaginations of millions since it first roared across the world's TV screens when Gene Roddenberry's *Star Trek* debuted on 8 September 1966.

The first Enterprise, like so much of the technology in the original *Trek*, was designed by Walter M Jeffries, a former aviation artist and World War 2 vet drafted in by Roddenberry to serve as set designer and art director, roles in which he brought the Great Bird Of The Galaxy's vision of the 23rd century to life.

"At first," Jeffries said in *The Art Of Star Trek*, "Gene said he didn't want to see any rockets, no jets, no firestreams, or anything like that. So I bought whatever I could find on *Buck Rogers* and *Flash Gordon* and pinned it up on the wall and said, 'That we will not do'."

Jeffries' modular approach to starship construction, honed from years of frustration with impractical military designs, extended from the bridge's workstations to the exterior warp nacelles.

"This was probably one of the few areas I ever argued with Gene about," said Jeffries. "I wanted the exterior just about as plain and smooth as we could get it. To me, the most dangerous possible environment is outside a spaceship. And, as Mrs Murphy says, some time or other, anything that people make is going to break, so why have equipment outside the hull that they're going to have to work on? Keep it inside."



The original modular design.

This aesthetic informed all three years of Jeffries' work on *Star Trek*, as well as the two years of its animated series spin-off. It was modified, however, when *Star Trek: The Motion Picture* debuted in 1979, and the Enterprise underwent a refit by concept designer/illustrator Andrew Probert. A protégé of legendary *Star Wars* artist Ralph McQuarrie, Probert had

previously designed the Cylon Centurions for the original *Battlestar Galactica*.

Talking to *SFX* from his home in Connecticut, Probert recalls, "I was about halfway through my last trimester at school when Ralph called me. He said, 'Listen, I got a problem. I'm working on *Star Trek*, but George called me to work on *Star Wars 2*. Are you available?' 'Wow!' I said, 'Yeah!'"

Probert was hired a week later by visual effects artist Robert Abel, whose company had started work on the first *Trek* film.

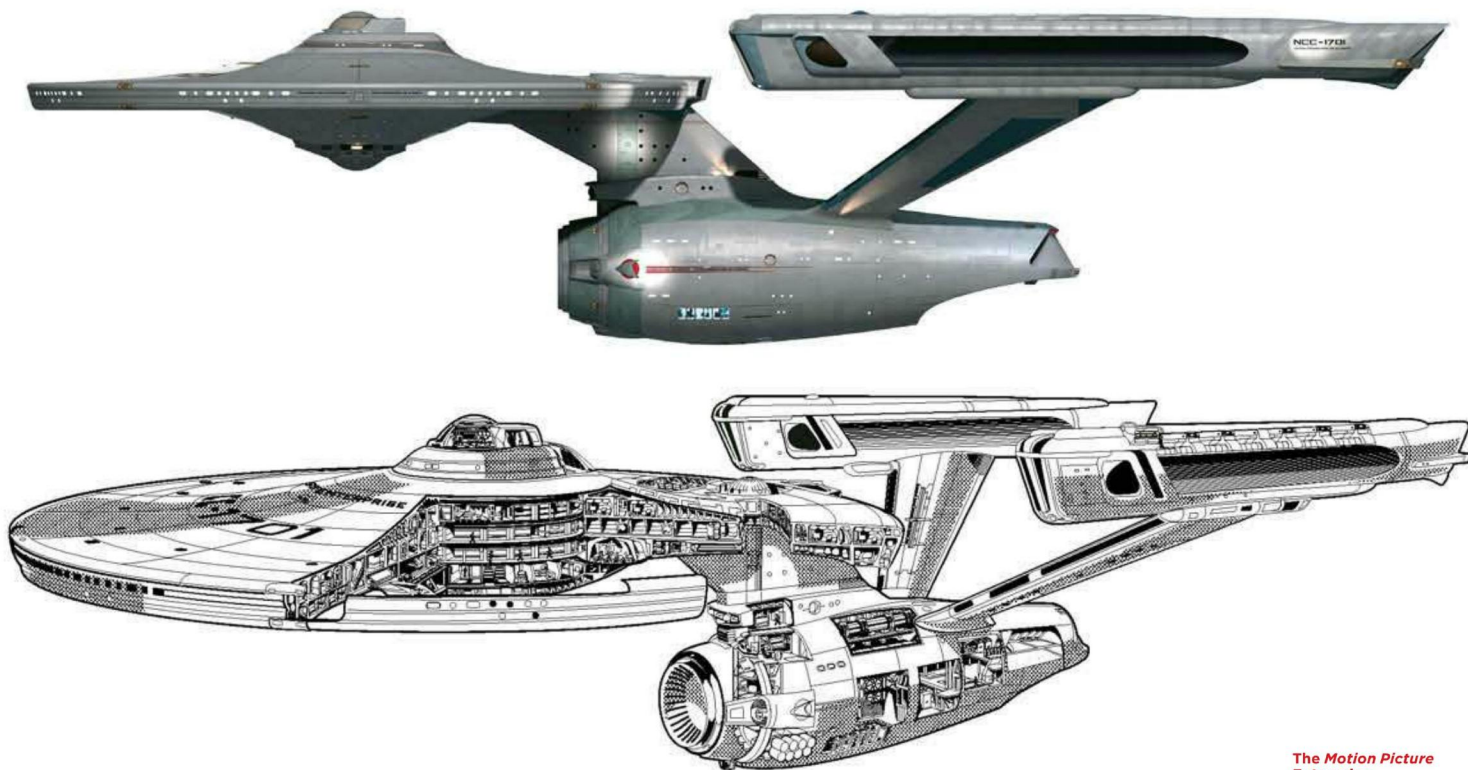
"I was working under award-winning art director Richard Taylor. He had a lot of ideas for the Enterprise, so I was drawing bits and pieces. The exterior was me giving components to Richard and him implementing them as we went along. It was his vision that the new Enterprise had this kind of pristine, brand-new-baby look to it. He also wanted to have kind of a subliminal patriotic, red white and blue colour scheme. So,



Not a firestream or rocket in sight.



The view from the warp nacelles.



The Motion Picture Enterprise.

Bridging The Generations | On board the Enterprise

The technology onboard the Enterprise has undergone as many changes as the ship's exterior, starting with *Star Trek: The Motion Picture*. Hugo Award-winning artist Rick Sternbach worked uncredited on the film, and eventually served as senior illustrator on *Star Trek: The Next Generation*.

"The basic look, the props, a lot of the setpieces, were really determined starting with *The Motion Picture*," Sternbach tells *SFX*. "Watch 'Encounter At Farpoint' and you can see there is a very definite lineage. In 1987, when we started *TNG*, we looked at a lot of the things that were going on in real science and computing. We said, 'This stuff is going to change...'. Gene Roddenberry said, 'Make it smaller, make it faster, make it cleaner'. And we applied that to just about everything."

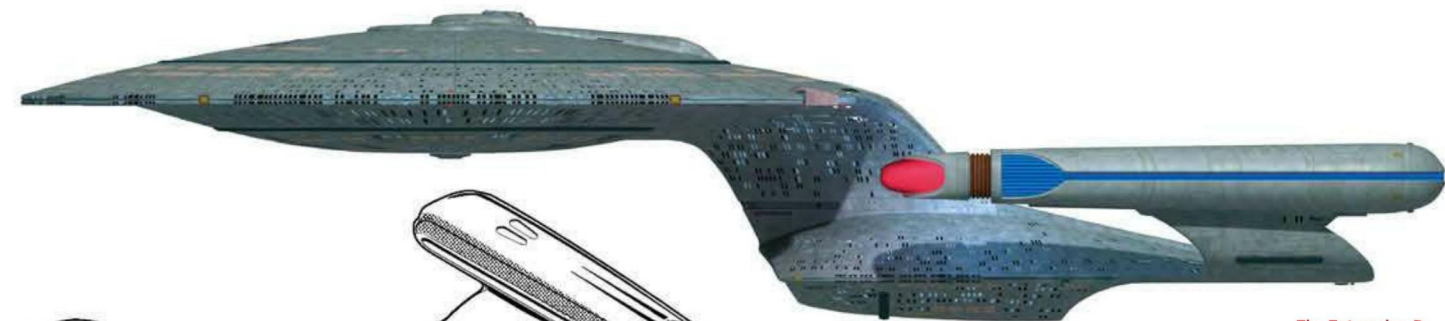
Sternbach admits that some things didn't work out so well. "The cricket phaser, the Type 1, ended up being a little too

small. That's why we pretty much ditched the cricket in favour of the Type 2 hand phaser: it was big, you could see it, and it looked like a cool hand prop."

The artist, who also worked on *Deep Space Nine* and *Voyager*, shrugs when asked if he thinks *TNG*'s sleek universe of flat-panelled PADDs inspired today's iPhones and iPads.

"I think it's a convergence. Starfleet style has always been very minimalist – you have a couple of straight lines and some rounded corners. I don't think we came up with anything that was especially revolutionary, anything that hadn't already been suggested back in the '30s. We just put our own technological spin on the concepts. Go back and look at *Flash Gordon* and *Buck Rogers*, and some of the technology suggested in the *Lensman* books by EE Doc Smith. *Lensman* is really the start of everything we know."





The Enterprise-D was a radical departure from its predecessors.

of course, the markings were red against the white of the ship, and there were blue panelled elements; the edges of the warp engines and the dorsal and the leading edges of the nacelles, the pylons for the warp nacelles, were all blue.

"We'd actually designed a whole set of pin stripes that went around the ship – around the saucer – that highlighted various areas. There was this really cool thing going on there. Once Donald Trumbull took the production over, he threw all of those things away. But he did add the idea of self-illumination, so I had to come up with the best way to bury the lights."

Of the end result, Probert says – a note of surprise still in his voice – "For a lot of the fans, it turned out to be their favourite ship".

The refitted Enterprise proved so popular that even though it was destroyed in the third *Trek* film, the ship that succeeded it, the NCC-1701-A, used the same design. Introduced in the final scenes of 1986's *Star Trek IV: The Voyage Home*, this Enterprise survived two additional films before being mothballed by the Federation and Paramount.

Though Probert wasn't involved in the sequels, he returned to Roddenberry's universe when *Star Trek: The Next Generation* began production in 1987. For the second live-action



Trek TV series, set 85 years after the preceding films, he designed what many fans consider the ultimate starship: the Enterprise NCC-1701-D.

"Initially they hired me on *The Next Generation* to design the bridge," Probert explains. "It was going to be the most used set and they assumed that would take the most lead time, but at the same time I was fantasising about what the exterior of the ship would look

like. I'd do these little doodles – idea sketches that I'd tack up on my wall. One day [writer-producer] David Gerrold walked in and said, 'Is that going to be the new Enterprise?' I replied, 'I don't know'. He said, 'Let me have it,' pulled the drawing off the wall and walked out the room. Later he comes back, slaps it on my desk and says, 'Yeah, that's the new Enterprise'."

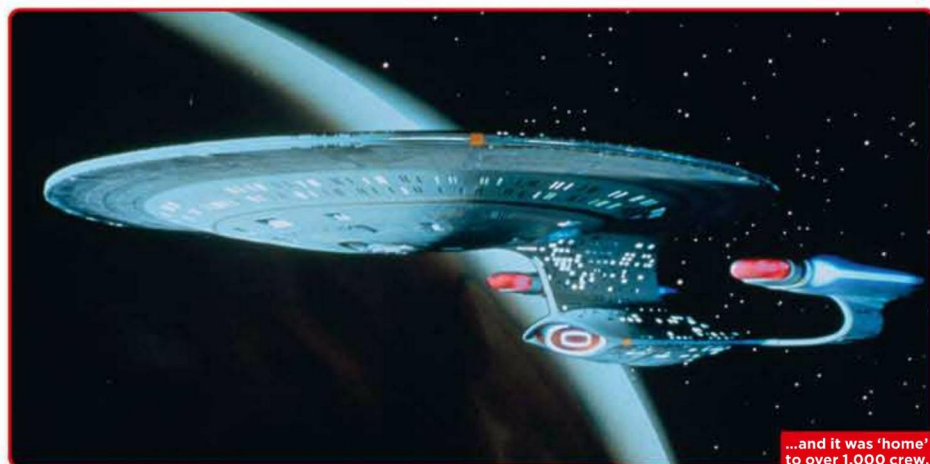
The Next Generation's Enterprise immediately distinguished itself with a primary hull that was much larger than its engineering hull.

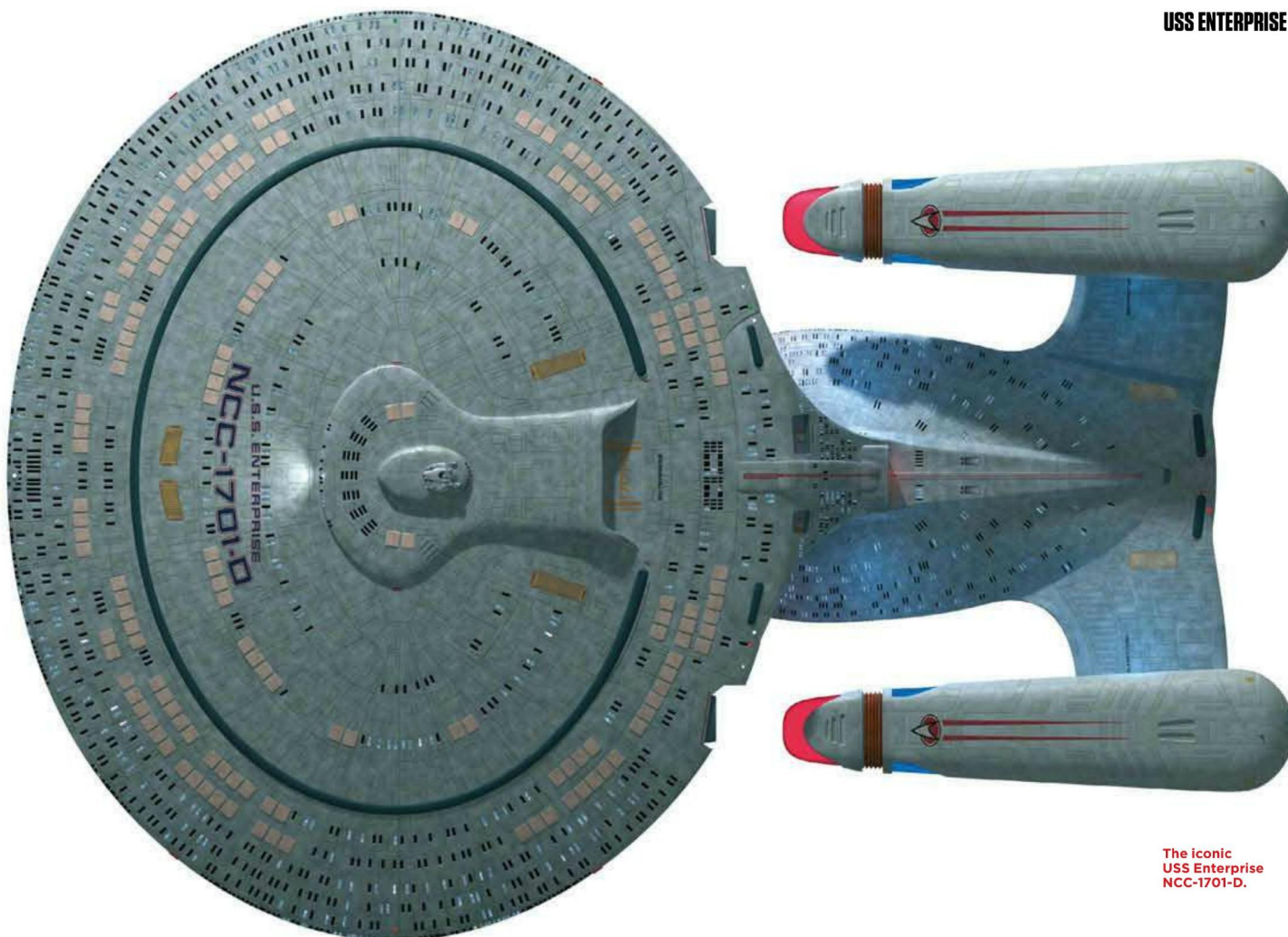
"My thinking was the technology would use less and less room to be just as powerful or more so, so the engineering hull would not have to be as large in relation to the rest of the ship. The warp engines are longer than those on the movie Enterprise, so it's not like they've changed – it's just that everything else has got bigger."

The new Enterprise also employed a more organic look befitting an even more advanced society than the original *Trek's*, taking Matt Jeffries's dream of a smooth starship exterior to its ultimate conclusion.

"The reason I went down the elegant versus hard tech look," says Probert, "is because I felt that it was an ambassador for the human race, an ambassador for Starfleet. It should look very unthreatening, it should be very soft. Those organic shapes are additionally very strong compared to geometric shapes. There was," he adds proudly, "a lot of reasoning behind the way the new Enterprise turned out."

Star Trek Enterprise illustrations taken from Haynes's *USS Enterprise Owners' Workshop Manual* by Ben Robinson and Marcus Riley, on sale now. The remastered first season of *Star Trek: The Next Generation* is now airing on Syfy HD.





The iconic
USS Enterprise
NCC-1701-D.

“As an ambassador for the human race, an ambassador for Starfleet, it should look very unthreatening and very soft”

Where Someone Has Gone Before | Enterprise A and D designer Andrew Probert on the ships which followed his...

NX-01

“This was a shape executive producer Rick Berman insisted be used because he liked it – whether it fit the timeline or not. Designers John Eaves or Doug Drexler were tasked with coming up with something that looked like it happened before Kirk’s Enterprise. It really made absolutely no sense to me at all. I couldn’t watch the show, regardless of how good it might have been. I’m a visual guy and it just bothered me.”



Captain Archer’s
NX-01.

NCC-1701-E

“This was designed by John Eaves. There are a lot of things I don’t like about this ship. Instead of taking the elegant path he took the hardware tech path. *Battlestar Galactica* and the *Nostromo* go down the hardware tech path. *Prometheus* looks like it’s halfway in between. *Serenity* is about halfway in between. But there are not a lot of elegant spaceships out there.”



A leaner ship than
her predecessor.



Rick Sternbach and
Andrew Probert.

NCC-1701 (alternate timeline)

“I disagree with the scale and ambiguity. I don’t have a problem with them creating their own version of the Enterprise, because it’s a whole new turnaround on the franchise. What I do have a problem with is designing a totally new Enterprise from the neck down and then plugging in a movie saucer on top. That totally bothers me. I’d rather they came up with a different type of saucer, so the design is cohesive.”



JJ Abrams’ take
on the NCC-1701.



Future Shows

The hottest sci-fi and fantasy shows heading your way in early 2013...

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEWS!



Being Human USA

A third season of Stateside vampire/ghost/werewolf houseshare

The third season of America's *Being Human* will jump 15 months into the future from the cliffhangers that wrapped up season two and left the supernatural roomies in jeopardy. Aidan (Sam Witwer) the vampire was buried inside a coffin, Sally (Meaghan Rath) the ghost was stuck in limbo, and werewolf Josh's (Sam Huntington) girlfriend Nora (Kristen Hager) was the possible recipient of a fatal gunshot.

Being Human showrunner Anna Fricke tells *SFX* exclusively that each character makes it out alive, but at what cost?

"Obviously at some point Aidan gets out because we can't have six episodes with him stuck inside a coffin," she laughs. "But we did want to make sure that all the cliffhangers meant something. If you leave the characters in those dire situations, you want it to really affect them so we wanted some time to pass so there are consequences and after-effects we can play with in season three.

"The theme this year is being careful what you wish for, so along those lines it really comes

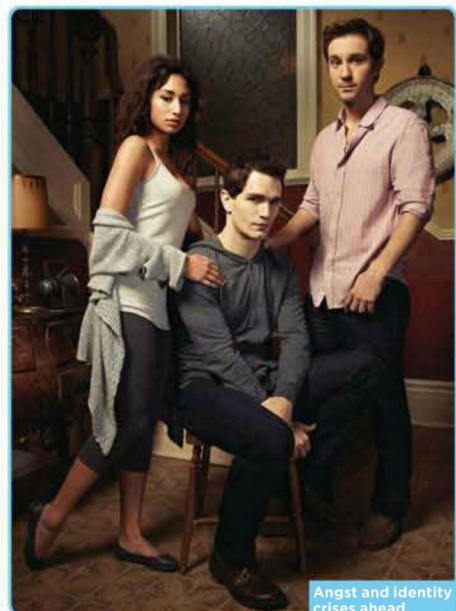
down to origin stories," Fricke continues. "The characters are struggling with the very core of what they are.

"It's about family by blood or family by choice. Part of that is about throwing the roommates together more, so then it's about the strength of their family, and the greater family of the types of monsters they are: how you're drawn to what you are despite the fact that you may be trying to get away from it."

Tonally Fricke says fans can expect more of their show's mix of dark comedy and tragedy. "We always have jokes where it seems inappropriate to have a joke because that's the whole thing about *Being Human*. Their lives are so ridiculous that they have to step away for a moment and laugh about it. I think there's a lot of that this season. There are some fantastic moments, especially as we catapult to the end of season three. And obviously the stakes get higher and higher and higher as you get into the final episodes and crazy things are happening."

Tara Bennett

ETA: JANUARY ON SYFY (US)



Angst and identity crises ahead.



"I really don't like needles."

Defiance

Where science fiction TV drama meets online gaming

The success of *Falling Skies* has proven that audiences still haven't lost their appetites for alien invasion sagas. But where most such epics end, *Defiance* begins. The story of an American refugee town struggling in the wake of a post-apocalyptic war against the invading Votans, it's the first-ever show that's symbiotically attached to a first-person MMO game.

"The game is in real time," *Defiance* executive producer Kevin Murphy tells *SFX*. "The missions change on an ongoing basis. Things that players do in the game can result from what we do on the show; and actions that players take in the game can have ramifications on the show. If you have a plague that started in the game, it might affect the characters on TV."

Murphy describes *Defiance* as influenced in equal parts by Robert Heinlein novels and Sam Peckinpah movies.

"On our staff," he laughs, "we really love that sort of gritty, dark character-based Peckinpah Western. It finds itself creeping into the DNA of the show from time to time. I'm a monstrous Robert Heinlein fan, so I've pulled a lot from my love for his ornery libertarian streak and the sexual unconventionality of his books; the idea that you depend on the restless patriot."

All of those ideas find their way into the science-fiction context. That's what these people are – they're this little island of independent civilisation, a boom town. And they're living in this world in which there are two empires slowly spreading their influence and looking to create unified national and global government again. And our people don't want any part of it. They want self-government.

"It's like the iconic Westerns. Cowboys were rugged, they did things for themselves. That's what's kind of awesome and fun about this show."

Joseph McCabe

ETA: APRIL ON SYFY (US AND UK)

"We really love that sort of gritty, dark character-based Peckinpah Western. It creeps into the show's DNA"



Joshua Nolan
(Grant Bowler).



Pale-faced Datak
and Stahma Tarr.

Zero Hour

It's all a big conspiracy, as that guy from *ER* finds out

As the man behind *G.I. Joe: Retaliation*, *Red 2* and the Chris Pine-starring *Jack Ryan*, producer Lorenzo di Bonaventura is the go-to guy for espionage in 2013. But the conspiracies in even his films might have a hard time competing with those in his upcoming TV show.

"Zero Hour is about a man [played by former *ER* stalwart Anthony Edwards], who, in the abduction of his wife, comes across a conspiracy so vast that it will blow your mind," Di Bonaventura tells *SFX*. "That's it in a nutshell."

"People always sort of boil it down to 'The Da Vinci Code meets *National Treasure*/'Indiana

Jones-style adventure' filled with biblical mysteries and things of that nature," says executive producer Zack Estrin.

"It's this one big, long mystery filled with little puzzles. The puzzles are hidden in these clocks that were made back in Nazi Germany in 1938, and each week one of these little puzzles will lead us closer and closer to something that the Church has been protecting.

"We've always been interested in puzzles and riddles as a way of driving storytelling, but also the idea of faith. We live in a world where it's discussed a lot, what people believe and why they believe it. One of the whole points of

this show is when things are coming to a head, when it seems like the world is speaking to you with disasters and things, who do you turn to? Who is your port in a storm? Your family? Your friends? The ones you love? How do you choose to conduct yourself when it seems like these may be the final hours?"

Estrin tells us that *Zero Hour* will follow "the same model as *24*, in that each season is its own story."

"We're not," he adds, "going to do the eight-year-long *Lost* island mystery."

Joseph McCabe

ETA: EARLY 2013 ON ABC (US)

© ABC/CRAIG SJODIN

Da Vinci's Demons

The *Dark Knight*'s co-writer heads for TV with historical fantasy

With his fingerprints all over the greatest superhero movie series ever – and a similarly key role on upcoming Superman reboot *Man Of Steel* – *Dark Knight* trilogy co-writer David Goyer could have his pick of any gig in Hollywood. It's rather exciting, then, that he's decided to bring his talents to the small screen, going back to the Renaissance to tell the story of a young Leonardo Da Vinci in his latest creation: *Da Vinci's Demons*.

British newcomer Tom Riley stars as a swashbuckling 25-year-old incarnation of one of history's greatest multi-taskers – not just the guy who painted the Mona Lisa, but also a scientist, inventor, adventurer and (this being a drama for grown-ups) lover. To put it in superhero terms it's an origin story: *Da Vinci Begins*, if you will...

"If you believe Vasari, who was Da Vinci's first biographer, he was a really vibrant strapping young man, a really good swordsman and horseman, and known to be a practical joker," Goyer tells *SFX*. "I think a lot of people don't really realise that, so it's fun to be able to present a Da Vinci that the general public wasn't aware of. But this isn't a documentary – it's a historical fantasy based on a lot of historical facts."

Richard Edwards

ETA: EARLY 2013 ON FX (UK) AND STARZ (US)



Tom Riley as the Italian polymath.

COURTESY STARZ/GREG WILLIAMS



Ghosts ruin the rural idyll.

Lightfields

There's trouble down the farm in ITV's *Marchlands* follow-up

Marchlands was a surprise hit when it debuted in 2011, spooking out millions of primetime ITV1 viewers with a ghost story spread across three time periods. Follow-up *Lightfields* keeps the format (one location, three distinct time zones), but aside from that starts entirely from scratch.

"The only similarity really is the format, which is based on an American programme called *The Oaks*," explains producer Cherry Gould. "Our story is set in a completely different time period, a completely different location, with completely different characters, and a completely new story."

So it's similar only in its very barest form.

"It was always the plan that we'd tell a different story," she continues, "because I don't think you could really revisit *Marchlands*. That was a story complete in itself. We were onto pastures new, and that meant that Simon Tyrell, our writer, could do anything with it he liked."

The *Lightfields* that the show takes its name from is a farmhouse (the same one used in *Black Beauty* in the '70s) whose 1944 residents are struck by tragedy in the wake of a barn fire. Spooky aftershocks then resonate into 1975 and 2012, causing trouble for the house's new owners. "1944 is almost an investigation of the events that happened in that period," says Gould, "and 1975 and 2012 play out the repercussions of that event."

Richard Edwards

ETA: EARLY 2013 ON ITV1 (UK)



Evil Captain Hatch is coming.

Being Human UK

It's down the Hatch with season five's new Big Bad

In last year's series climax, not only were *Being Human*'s ancient vampires, the Old Ones, destroyed, but they blew up a baby! How on earth do you top that?

"It's definitely something we talked about in terms of you have to make the world feel bigger, every series," explains new producer Polly Buckle. "So after the Old Ones, the next logical step was [REDACTED]."

Sorry, we can't tell you how that sentence finished – not just yet. You'll find out in time! What we can say is that you'll be chilled and disgusted by the new Big Bad: the manipulative, revolting Captain Hatch, played by Phil Davis. Hatch resides at a new regular location, the seaside Barry Grand Hotel, and encounters our heroes after Hal and Tom get jobs there.

"He's a sort of lingering menace in a fair amount of the episodes," Buckle explains. "He's the puppet-master, really. He comes in and out

with his manipulations – there's one episode he's barely in at all, and then he's much more in the next one."

This year, the episode count has been reduced from eight to six. Does that, and the fact that Hatch features in every one, mean that the series has more of a serial feel?

"There is definitely pressure with six to make it feel like it's all part of a coherent whole," Buckle says. "His character being in the hotel I guess could make it feel more serialised, because they're always going back there. But *Being Human*'s always been famous for its quirky episodic characters, so you've got to have those as well. Hatch's machinations help with those stories of the week, rather than his story being the lead story in every single episode. So I think there's equally the balance there always was."

Ian Berriman

ETA: EARLY 2013 ON BBC THREE (UK)

Also On

Other shows to look out for...

The gloves are on in *Do No Harm*.

Do No Harm

Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Strange Case Of Dr Jekyll And Mr Hyde* has inspired dozens of adaptations and remakes, from *The Incredible Hulk* to *The Nutty Professor* to Steven Moffat's recent BBC updating. As Moffat's *Sherlock* led to the US *Elementary*, so his *Jekyll* has paved the way for *Do No Harm* – *Desperate Housewives* producer David Schulner's contemporary take

on the tale, in which neurosurgeon Jason Cole taps into the dark side of humanity.

ETA: EARLY 2013 ON NBC (US)

Black Mirror

Charlie Brooker's anthology series returns for a second three-episode run. We don't yet know what twisted tales the acerbic TV critic turned multi-hyphenate writer-presenter has planned for his second outing, but you can rest assured it'll be thought provoking and controversial stuff. The question is, can he top having the British PM getting down to business with a pig on national TV – and would he want to?

ETA: EARLY 2013 ON CHANNEL 4 (UK)

Game Of Thrones

The most epic of epic fantasies returns for an eagerly anticipated third season. We're so excited about this one we wrote a big feature about it, which you can read on page 106.

ETA: EASTER-ISH ON SKY ATLANTIC (UK) AND HBO (US)

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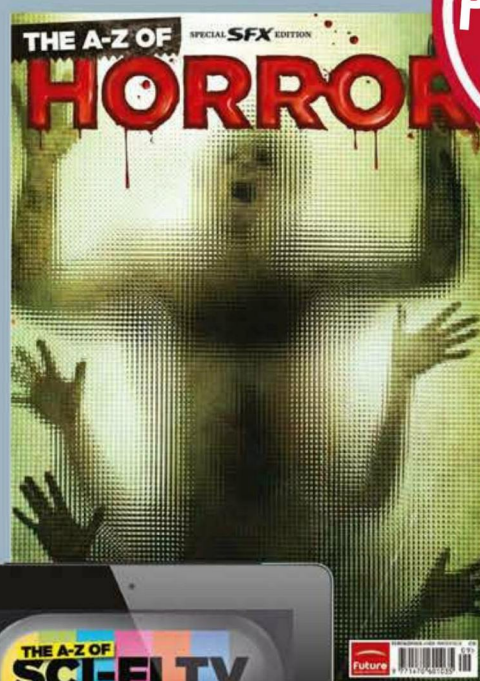
Dave

Dave Bradley
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Gamechangers

Ten classic TV shows
that transformed
science fiction and
fantasy forever



GAMECHANGERS

Quatermass

THE FACTS

Creator: Nigel Kneale

Lifetime: 1953-79

Number of seasons: N/A

Number of episodes: 4



Martians under London in *The Pit*.

THE LEGACY

Quatermass's legacy runs deep in not only British SF, but also American (John Carpenter litters his movies with references to the show – see *The Thing*, above). Jon Pertwee's era of *Doctor Who* was heavily influenced by the *Quatermass* serials – so much so that script editor Terrance Dicks approached Kneale to write for the newly Earth-bound series. Kneale, who despised *Doctor Who*, turned him down – and the professor was name-checked in 1988's "Remembrance Of The Daleks". The BBC remounted *The Quatermass Experiment* in 2005, as a live BBC Four production, casting Jason Flemyng as a newly buff Bernard Quatermass.

THE PITCH

Professor Bernard Quatermass of the British Rocket Group confronts – four times! – sinister alien forces that threaten to destroy humanity. He has an odd aversion to keeping the same face two stories in a row.

WHY IT'S GREAT

Nigel Kneale probably wouldn't have been happy seeing his name in a science fiction magazine. Despite his godfather role to a raft of SF writers, he was haughtily dismissive of most drama that sat under the sci-fi umbrella. Nevertheless, his greatest creation – Professor Bernard Quatermass of the British Rocket Group – brought grown-up SF to British TV screens at a time when the genre, outside of middlebrow literature, was at its most embarrassingly infantile.

Quatermass is not only one of the most important SF series of all time, it's a landmark series in the history of television itself. TV drama in 1953 was barely past its potty training when Nigel Kneale, then only 31, was asked to cook up a serial to fill a six-week gap in the BBC's Saturday night schedule. Back then, there wasn't a tremendous amount of original TV drama, most of the BBC's output being stiff adaptations of stage plays or novels and all from the established canon of *What Was Good For People*. *The Quatermass Experiment* was ecstatically different. It was ambitious, it was intelligent, it was powerfully disturbing and it was unashamedly science fiction. Of course, 1953 was a pre-ITV age, meaning the BBC (this is 11 years before it became BBC One) had a captive audience. Outside of the coronation (screened only a month previously), *The Quatermass Experiment* was one of the very first event television moments, scooping up audiences of around four million, which – given the scarcity of television sets in 1953 – amounts now to success of Live 8 proportions.

Two years later, *Quatermass II* arrived. In what would become a norm of the series, Quatermass was given a new face. The professor was now played by John Robinson (*The Quatermass Experiment*'s Reginald Tate having died of a heart attack only two weeks before recording), who reluctantly took up the role and often seemed bamboozled by the script's technical chat. By now ITV was up and sprinting and *Quatermass* was deemed a sure ratings clobberer for the corporation. In just two years, the number of TV sets in British homes had doubled and *Quatermass II* netted an average of 8.5 million viewers, enough to see ITV off and establish the Professor as one of Auntie's most valued critical and commercial assets.

Quatermass's crowning achievement came with the third serial, *Quatermass And The Pit*, which arrived (with another new Quatermass, this time the definitive André Morell) in 1958. The production values had been amped up, due to the BBC's purchase of Ealing Studios in 1955, and the story – which had an ancient Martian spaceship uncovered deep beneath Knightsbridge – was Kneale's most beguiling marriage of superstition and science.

“Not only one of the most important SF series, but a landmark series in the history of TV itself”

Despite its sprinting success, Kneale had no desire to keep *Quatermass* alive after *The Pit*. “I didn't want to go on repeating because Professor Quatermass had already saved the world from ultimate destruction three times, and that seemed to me to be quite enough,” he said later.

Still, never say never again, as the song goes, and in 1973 Kneale penned what he thought would be the definitive final chapter of the *Quatermass* story for the BBC. Amazingly, for a corporation that had cherished *Quatermass* as their own, they bailed on a fourth story, with ITV taking on the mantle in 1979. An even more ambitious and balls-out SF tale than even *Quatermass And The Pit*, the fourth story (now with Sir John Mills as Quatermass, the fourth actor in as many stories), the simply titled *Quatermass* both benefited from and was handicapped by the surge in budget. A grim, dystopian parable, the four-part serial finally killed off the professor, sacrificing himself to save the Earth.

Kneale's *Quatermass* serials are milestone works in the history of popular television drama, and used science fiction to reflect back the headlines of the day, whether it be American militarisation of Britain (*Quatermass II*), race riots (*Quatermass And The Pit*) or environmentalism (*Quatermass*). And though he may have been antagonistic to the genre as a whole, Nigel Kneale is one of our more cherished SF scribes. Though he's probably turning in his grave hearing that.

Steve O'Brien



John Mills as Prof Quatermass.



Paranoia and panic aplenty.



The last bookworm on Earth.

The Twilight Zone

THE FACTS

Creator: **Rod Serling**
Lifetime: **1959-1964**
Number of seasons: **5**
Number of episodes: **156**

THE PITCH

An all-purpose, anything-goes anthology series, suitable for telling tales of science fiction, fantasy or horror. Often employing twist endings like those found in the SF magazines of the '40s and '50s.

WHY IT'S GREAT

In many ways, sci-fi TV can be divided into programmes created before *The Twilight Zone* and those created after. Though Rod Serling didn't invent the types of stories that his show came to be known for, he was the first writer/producer to present them in a way that would resonate with a wide audience: lyrical, passionate and – in the best sense of the

phrase – of their time. For the late '50s and early '60s was the beginning of a sea change in Western pop culture, as the world had at long last begun recovering from the Second World War and was coming to terms with its socioeconomic aftershock. Serling, a war veteran and former boxer, came from the hard-knock school of TV writing, honing his craft writing acclaimed teleplays, like *Requiem For A Heavyweight*. His most beloved creation came at exactly the right moment, when conformity still dominated an American generation yearning for the next stage in its maturity.

Week after week, the dry, sharply suited host smuggled concepts and perspectives into US homes that were long the exclusive domain of print fiction. Part pitchman, part moralist, part diplomat, Serling introduced – frequently with cigarette in hand – literacy and a preoccupation with the human condition to SF TV (previously the domain of shows like *Tom Corbett*, *Space Cadet*).

The mastermind was inspired in equal parts by the radio dramas of Norman Corwin and the short stories of Ray Bradbury (whom he attempted to recruit for the *Zone*, but could only nab for one episode, "I Sing The Body Electric"). Though Serling would eventually write a staggering 92 of *The Twilight Zone*'s 156 episodes, his writing staff would consist of three master fantasists from the Bradbury school of thought: Richard Matheson, Charles Beaumont and George Clayton Johnson. Each believed, like John Collier before them, that the best fantasy stories introduce just one element of the extraordinary into the everyday world. From their typewriters came irony-laden fables like "Time Enough Last" (starring Burgess Meredith), about a henpecked bookworm who survives a nuclear apocalypse; "The Invaders" (starring Agnes Moorehead), about an isolated farm woman who must defeat a miniature but deadly space invasion; and "Nightmare At 20,000 Feet" (starring a young William Shatner), about a paranoid airplane passenger convinced there's a gremlin on the wing of his plane.

Serling and his team frequently fused their imaginations to hot-button social issues as well, crafting unforgettable tales that examined racism at the height of the civil rights



Rod Serling: a sci-fi legend.

© Rex Features

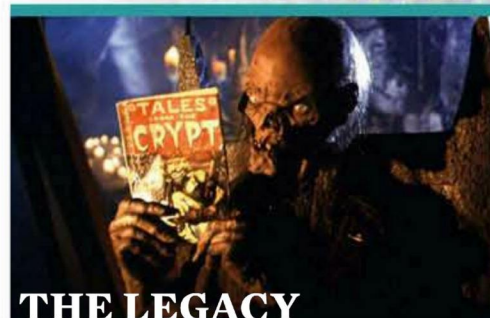


The Invaders: tiny but terrifying.



©Everett Collection/Rex Features

Facing up to inner ugliness in "The Masks".



THE LEGACY

If any show's influence can be called incalculable, it's *The Twilight Zone*. In its wake came almost every other literate genre TV show, like Gene Roddenberry's *Star Trek* and *The Prisoner*, as well as many other noteworthy anthology series, from *The Outer Limits* to *Night Gallery* (Serling's follow-up) and *Tales From The Crypt* (above). It also inspired the 1983 film from directors John Landis, Steven Spielberg, Joe Dante and George Miller; along with two TV revivals – in 1985 and 2002. The more successful '80s revival employed legendary scribes Harlan Ellison and George RR Martin as creative consultant and story editor.

movement (years before *Star Trek* would present its diverse crew of explorers), as well as blacklisting in the wake of McCarthyism and Cold War paranoia during the Bay of Pigs Invasion. "The Monsters Are Due On Maple Street", for example, depicts a small town that tears itself apart as its residents grow convinced they're under attack by aliens – a chilling commentary on the Red Scare. "Two" (starring Charles Bronson and Elizabeth Montgomery), a story of the last man and woman on earth, looks at the futility of war. And "The Encounter" (starring a young George Takei) concerns Americans fighting Asians. Though it did not air when *The Twilight Zone* went into syndication, it debuted as America sent troops to Vietnam.

In addition to employing many actors who would become household names, *The Twilight Zone* could boast of regular musical contributions from legendary genre film composers Jerry Goldsmith and Bernard Herrmann – who created the first season's opening theme. (The bongos-and-guitar title

"Serling introduced literacy and a preoccupation with the human condition to SF TV"

tune for seasons two to five was the work of French avant-garde composer Marius Constant.) Season one also featured surrealist titles from the famed UPA animation studio. Rich black-and-white cinematography, often reminiscent of the finest in film noir, was provided by George T. Clemens. *The Twilight Zone*'s directors included top filmmakers Richard Donner and Don Siegel.

Of *The Twilight Zone*'s five seasons, all but one (the fourth), consisted of half-hour episodes, the perfect format in which to pack the short, sharp shock of the new that helped transform a cultural landscape. 🍷

Joseph McCabe



© Rex Features

"I read the news today, oh boy."

Doctor Who

THE FACTS

Creators: Sydney Newman, CE Webber, Donald Wilson
Lifetime: 1963-present (let's forget about that big gap from 1989-2005)

Number of seasons: 33 (not counting the specials in 2009)

Number of episodes: 789 (to date)

THE PITCH

A grumpy old man turns into a tramp, Worzel Gummidge, a walking scarf, Tristan, a multicoloured fool, Radagast the Brown, I, Christopher Eccleston, a Scottish man pretending to be Cockney and that dude with the face. Messes about in time and space. Originally intended to last one season in 1963. Still going strong.

WHY IT'S GREAT

Honestly, has there ever been a television show quite like *Doctor Who*? Gerard Garrett, of former tabloid newspaper *The Daily Sketch*, famously described it as, "the children's own programme which adults adore". A perfect summation, but it's so much more than that...

Fans often talk about the flexibility of the programme's format. And while that's only sort of true – can you imagine a *Doctor Who* episode that doesn't feature either monsters, peril or running down corridors? – it's the only show in the world that can skip so easily between settings and genres, while telling stories about life, death, love, monstrous invasions and morality. It can be both deathly serious and utterly ridiculous – often in the same episode.

When the show first started, it was designed to live up to the BBC's Reithian ideals. Like the corporation itself, it would "inform, educate and entertain". Historical stories with no monsters or time paradoxes rubbed shoulders with trips to alien civilisations and bat's arse weirdness like "The Web Planet".

That mandate shifted over time, with the historical stories quickly being shelved. Instead, Patrick Troughton's era focused more on the monsters. Then, with Jon Pertwee's appointment as the Doctor, it changed again, becoming a contemporary military adventure series. This ability to adapt to changing circumstances and cultural tastes is key to *Doctor Who*'s survival, and also to its appeal. And it's something that continues to this day. The twisty-turny (we're avoiding that other phrase...) plotting that characterises the Moffat era is very different to the (literally) down-to-Earth Christopher Eccleston year. And if you don't like the series as it is now, fear not – in a couple of years' time it will be entirely different again.

At the heart of the show's enduring popularity is the Doctor himself – one of the greatest fictional characters of all time. No hype – the Doctor is now easily as iconic as Sherlock Holmes, Aslan the lion and Bilbo Baggins. An alien traveller with no name from a mysterious planet, he's all things to all people. At different times throughout the show he's a pacifist, a warrior, a hero, an anarchist, the most dangerous man in the universe, a fool (in all senses), a father, a grandfather and your cheeky best pal. He eschews violence (except for the times when he doesn't – "Vengeance On



With Susan (Carole Ann Ford), his first companion.



"Go on, have a jelly baby."



Doctors reunited for a 1983 special.



THE LEGACY

Star Trek is said to have inspired a generation of scientists and astronauts; *Doctor Who* had the same effect on creatives. The current production team aside (almost all of whom are fans), writers like JK Rowling, Robert Rankin and Grant Morrison have clearly been influenced by it. Artist Mark Wallinger created a sculpture of a dematerialising TARDIS, and Orbital finish gigs with their remix of Delia Derbyshire's groundbreaking theme. There's also a whole crop of directors – Peter Jackson, David Yates, Nicolas Winding Refn and Rian Johnson – who love the show and have expressed an interest in working on it.

Varos", we're looking at you) and tries not to get too involved in the affairs of others (except for every bloody week!). He's both a blank slate that incoming writers can leave their mark on, and also a character with a rich, detailed history. There really is no one else like him on TV.

Then there's the wonderful universe that he inhabits – a universe, let's not forget, that has been improvised by hundreds of different people, running a creative relay race since 1963. There's a vast, bewildering mythology to *Doctor Who* now – from Gallifrey and the Time Lords, to the never-ending parade of monsters. Most television shows manage, at best, one iconic baddie in their lifetime – *Doctor Who* has at least five: the legendary Daleks, the Cybermen, The Master, Davros and the Weeping Angels. Then there's the menagerie of memorable second-tier baddies: the reptile-like Silurians, the dome-headed Sontarans and the scaly-skinned Ice Warriors...

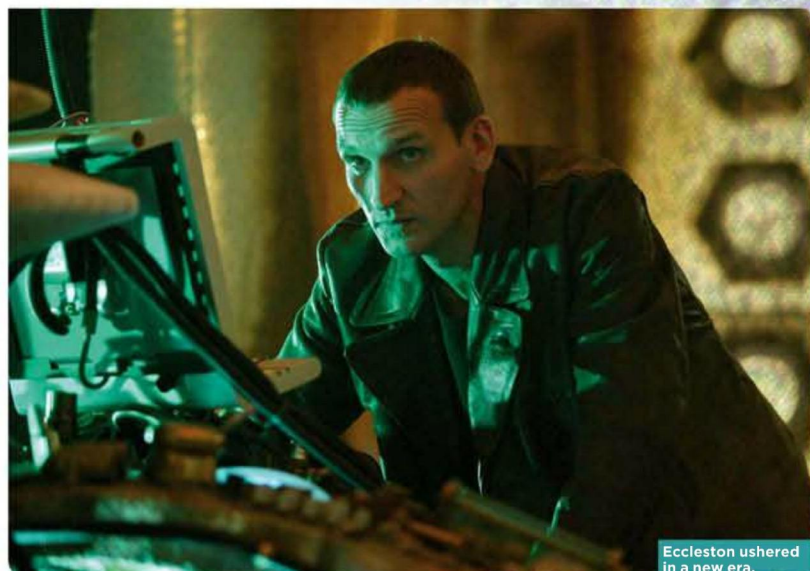
Crucially, though, that mythology only exists as much or as little as the current showrunner wants it to. It's very rare that you need to know anything about *Doctor Who* before watching the latest episode.

In fact, that's probably the most unique thing about this show: it's a true mainstream success. *Doctor Who* isn't like *Stargate*, *Battlestar Galactica* or *Lost*. All fine shows, sure, but none of them have been taken to the heart of a nation in the way that *Doctor Who* has. Even *Star Trek* – the closest equivalent in terms of longevity and popularity – never had the same mass appeal. *Doctor Who* is as much family light entertainment as a genre piece. People who wouldn't normally go near anything featuring spaceships and aliens adore it. And even if you've never actually seen an episode, if you grew up in the UK between 1963 and 1989, or 2005 and now, you'll know what the TARDIS is, or what a Dalek looks like. It's not just our show now. It's the nation's. 📺

Will Salmon

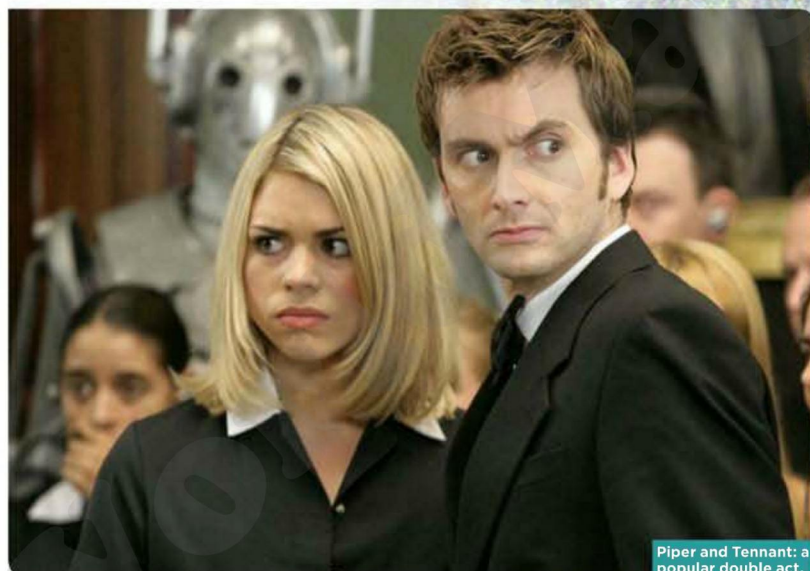


"Come on, that just isn't cricket."



Eccleston ushered in a new era.

"No sci-fi show has been taken to the heart of a nation like *Doctor Who* has – even *Star Trek* never had the same mass appeal"



Piper and Tennant: a popular double act.

Star Trek



THE FACTS

Creator: **Gene**

Roddenberry

Lifetime: **1966-1969**

Number of seasons: **3**

Number of episodes: **79**

THE PITCH

The show that boldly went where no one had gone before – into space to teach the hot alien chicks about this thing we humans call... love. And if the alien males didn't like it, they learnt the hard way that the Prime Directive wasn't going to stop Kirk kicking your ass.

WHY IT'S GREAT

The original *Star Trek* only lasted for three seasons – and was almost cancelled after the second – but it enjoys a profile in the public imagination that other sci-fi shows can only regard

with green-eyed envy. The show's catchphrases remain part of our modern vocabulary more than 40 years after the series first aired. It had action, computers you could talk to, strange alien races, cool technology and girls in really short skirts and go-go boots. In 1966, the future looked awesome.

The show had pretensions of profundity, exploring the nature of good and evil, the existence of parallel universes and much more. The writers on the series pushed at the limits of the genre by creating storylines that brought in elements from outside science fiction. There were '20s mobsters in "A Piece Of The Action", a World War 2 adventure in "Pattern Of Force" and even swords and sandals in the gladiatorial escapade "Bread And Circuses".

A large part of *Trek's* appeal lies in the cast, particularly the central trinity of Kirk, McCoy and Spock. The charismatic William Shatner brought humour, passion and boundless self-confidence to the Captain of the USS Enterprise. Kirk was not averse to swapping knuckle sandwiches with the bad guys, he had a proclivity for taking his shirt off and the ladies never knew what hit them. He had two foils in Leonard Nimoy's wry, detached Mr Spock and DeForest Kelley's perpetually bad tempered Doctor McCoy. Later incarnations of *Star Trek* never managed to create a character as thoroughly irascible as McCoy, who brought considerable frisson to every conversation with his inflexible morality and sharp tongue. Spock, an icon of science fiction in his own right, was the brains of the operation – rational, analytical and cool under pressure. McCoy was the conscience and Kirk the heart. And they had that elusive, sought-after quality that all TV casting directors dream of: chemistry.

The supporting cast asserted their own personalities until Scotty (James Doohan), Chekov (Walter Koenig), Uhura



Starships don't get better than this.



(Almost) all human life is here.



THE LEGACY

Gene Roddenberry's creation has become a sci-fi institution with blockbuster movies, spin-offs (above), novels and mountains of merchandise but the show's influence extends far beyond the realm of popular culture. NASA asked Nichelle Nichols to help them recruit more women and ethnic minorities for the space shuttle programme, while George Takei is a high profile activist for gay rights. When James Doohan passed away, his ashes were sent into space onboard the Falcon 9 rocket. Rivalled only by *Star Wars*, *Star Trek* remains the sci-fi franchise against which all others are measured. Live long and prosper, indeed.

(Nichelle Nichols) and Sulu (George Takei) were as vital to the identity of the show as the three leads. Much praise has been heaped on *Star Trek* for its vision of racial integration and the show was a pioneer in giving prominent roles to non-white and non-American characters. (Compare the casts of its predominantly white contemporaries *Lost In Space* and *The Time Tunnel*.) Kirk's crew was ethnically diverse and while the format has been repeated in every subsequent *Trek* incarnation with varying degrees of success, none of the spin-offs existed in a context as charged as that of '60s America. The Civil Rights Act was passed in 1964, just two years before the series began, but that was not the end of the struggle – Martin Luther King would be shot dead in 1968.

Against this backdrop of social upheaval, *Star Trek* featured a racially integrated crew all working in an atmosphere of respect and cooperation. True, the three principal stars were all white men and not every episode is a glorious ode to equality – witness the terrible stereotyping of Native Americans in "The Paradise Syndrome" with white actors in make-up and wigs. However, factors like that have to be balanced against everything the show did right. Sulu provided a positive portrayal of an Asian character, while having a Russian character, Chekov, on the bridge on the Enterprise during the Cold War suggested that in the future mankind could put aside its differences. However, what stands out most of all is the scene in "Plato's Stepchildren" when Kirk kisses Uhura. In 2012, that's no longer such a big deal (although still a remarkably rare occurrence on US television) but the sight of a white man passionately kissing a black woman in the US in 1969 was daring and taboo-smashing. This was in an era when some US states still segregated the use of water fountains. Kirk and Uhura really were boldly going where no one had gone before. 🚀

David West



Spock: an early advocate of the botoxed brow.

"The sight of a white man passionately kissing a black woman was daring and taboo-smashing"



What's spooked Scotty and Uhura?



Always a sucker for a blonde...

The Prisoner



What NHS specs were like in the '60s.

© ITV / Rex Features

THE FACTS

Creators: Patrick McGoochan, George Markstein
Lifetime: 1967-1968
Number of seasons: 1
Number of episodes: 17

THE PITCH

Bloke off *Danger Man* (possibly) resigns and wakes up in a nice village somewhere in Wales (possibly), except he's now called Number Six. Lots of different men ask him why he resigned, but grumpy chaps won't tell them.

WHY IT'S GREAT

As a revolutionary icon, Patrick McGoochan possessed few of the qualifying credentials. At 39, this well-tailored Catholic, whose fame had been fuelled by his lead role in the defining crime drama of the time, *Danger Man*, was hardly a natural bed-chum of the counterculture's more primary-coloured flame-throwers. So when McGoochan approached ATV supremo Lew Grade sometime in 1966, suggesting a follow-up series to *Danger Man*, the cigar-rattling mogul had no reason

to believe he was being sold something so wonderfully wonky and so dizzyingly original that it would become as emblematic of counterculture chic as *Sgt Pepper*, Twiggy in a mini dress or Dylan going electric.

A furiously-stirred stew of Orwellian prophecy, Swiftian satire, Kafkaesque nightmare and a Bonzo Dog Band sense of the absurd, *The Prisoner* caught the spirit of the time in a way few other TV dramas managed. This was McGoochan reaching out to the radicals with a flower in one hand and a machine gun in the other. "I wanted to have controversy, arguments, fights, discussions," he said later. "I wanted people in anger waving their fists in my face saying, 'How dare you? Why don't you do more *Danger Man* that we can understand?'"

Even if the spare, elliptical storytelling proved a headthrob to Joe and Jane Public, *The Prisoner's* lush production values made the series a virtual spa for the eyes. Portmeirion was a location prepackaged for the colour television age, and the show's crisp 35mm photography made *The Prisoner* look struttily cinematic. Just think how much less attractive the series would be had it been made seven or eight years later, on the then standard 16mm, all flickering grain and washed out colours.

The Prisoner's conception is still unclear. George Markstein, the show's script editor until he walked, claimed a co-parent role until he died in 1987. But whatever it was that the solidly straight Markstein helped devise, the series on screen is unmistakably McGoochan's. Growing increasingly autocratic, he not only starred and executive produced the show, but wrote and directed (under various pseudonyms) large chunks of it.

Only 17 episodes of *The Prisoner* were ever made. McGoochan later admitted that the concept was only able to sustain seven episodes, but Lew Grade's distribution plans included selling the series to CBS in the States and he asked McGoochan for a set of 26. McGoochan compromised, following



Number Six on the campaign trail.

© ITV / Rex Features



Number Twos' Bond villain-style lair.



THE LEGACY

The Prisoner's legacy took a long while to trickle down; the alternately perplexed and outraged reaction to McGoohan's cheese-dream of a series caused a move away from the studied weirdness of *The Prisoner*. More recently, though, its influence has started to be felt, with JJ Abrams citing it as a prime influence on *Lost* (above) and AMC birthing their own disappointing remake in 2009. It's also been referenced in *The Simpsons* (where McGoohan reprised his role as Number Six), *2Point4 Children* (where Ben is kidnapped and wakes up in Portmeirion) and as a special episode of '80s music show *The Tube*.

up the first block of 13 episodes with a further seven, and the promise of the final episode.

The relationship between McGoohan and his employer was a tight one. Because of *Danger Man*, McGoohan was a prized asset to the ITV network, and it was Grade who signed off *The Prisoner's* generous budget and allowed McGoohan to make the series at his own pace. But with the show drawing to an end, McGoohan was under pressure to wrap the series up and finally unveil the big man behind The Village.

When the moment came, it wasn't some Blofeld-type mastermind that was behind Number Six's kidnapping. But then anyone who thought, by the end of the last episode "Fall Out", that the resolution would be that simple and logical simply wasn't paying attention. When unmasked, Number One, if you managed not to blink, turned out to be Number Six himself. And not even Six looks surprised as he sees his own face leering back at him.

"It was an allegory," McGoohan insisted. "There are numbers in it – there are no names, so you can't expect it to end like James Bond. So you have to have an allegorical ending.

"The Prisoner's lush production values made the series a virtual spa for the eyes"

Now what is the most evil thing on Earth? Is it jealousy, is it hate, is it revenge, is it the bomb? When one really searches, it's only one thing – it's the evil part of oneself that one is constantly fighting until the moment of our demise."

So, who was Number Six? McGoohan's production company – formed to make *The Prisoner* – may provide a clue. Everyman was a symbolic figure in medieval morality plays, a character with no name or past, who was simply there to tell a story. Number Six may well represent everyone and no one, a blank cypher to symbolise the anti-establishment heart of humanity. But clear-cut answers is what *The Prisoner* is so adept at avoiding. Because like enigma, discovering its truth takes all the fun away. 🕵️

Steve O'Brien



The Village has all gone a bit Chitty.

GAMECHANGERS

Twin Peaks

THE FACTS

Creators: David Lynch
and Mark Frost
Lifetime: 1990-1991
Number of seasons: 2
Number of episodes: 30



A line-up of
kooky crackpots.



Laura's not looking her best.



THE LEGACY

It's no exaggeration to say *Twin Peaks* changed American TV forever, and not just sci-fi TV either. It ushered in an era of truly cinematic small screen storytelling. Though still shot in 4:3, gone were the questionable production values that plagued pre-*Peaks* productions, in their place cinematography as accomplished as anything Lynch committed to celluloid and narrative tomfoolery that opened the floodgates to the past two decades of pioneering TV. *Lost*, *American Horror Story* and *True Blood* (above) wouldn't exist without it, neither would videogames such as *Silent Hill*, *Max Payne* and *Deadly Premonition*. A damn fine legacy.

THE PITCH

An exceedingly eccentric FBI agent investigates a supernatural murder mystery in the weird and wacky logging town of Twin Peaks, where the only things finer than the peculiar denizens are the coffee and cherry pie.

WHY IT'S GREAT

The owls are not what they seem in *Twin Peaks*, a show so odd that at one stage it fooled almost 30 million Americans into entering the dark and twisted imagination of cinema's most subversive surrealist, David Lynch.

Co-created with Mark Frost, *Twin Peaks* marked the moment that weird became acceptably mainstream. To say it was like nothing on television at the time is selling it short; nothing has come close ever since.

And it wasn't the product of focus groups or board meeting brainstormers. For the first eight episodes at least, Lynch and Frost created their masterful police-investigation-show-meets-schlocky-soap-opera without interference, or expectation of an appreciative audience. Like some mad, endearing fever dream its outlandish imagery, off-kilter dialogue and bizarre twists and turns seared themselves into the psyche of unsuspecting viewers, and became instantly iconic in the process.

The delicious mystery – who killed Laura Palmer? – was the hook. But by their own admission Frost and Lynch considered it a MacGuffin. The real, beating heart of the show was the oddball characters. From Dale Cooper's zen Sherlock to Killer BOB's maniacal body-hopping murderer, each had a story to tell about silent drape runners, how that gum you like is going to come back in style or possessed logs. Unique and brilliant.

Also unique, and brilliant, was Angelo Badalamenti's breathtakingly timeless score. Famously, Badalamenti and Lynch composed the main "love" theme in 20 minutes on a Fender Rhodes keyboard, and rarely have creatives been so in tune with the needs of their show. The music established a mood that was so evocative mere notes are still enough to transport you to a familiar time and place.

Despite network ABC playing timeslot musical chairs with the first season it quickly became a bona fide cultural phenomenon, the very definition of a watercooler show. At the end of its first year *Twin Peaks* was nominated for 14 Emmys (winning two) and won the Golden Globe for Best TV Series. It was equal parts scary, funny, weird and sexy; but after the first season it all started to go a little wrong.

Lynch wasn't present (physically, at least) for much of the first season's production as it clashed with *Wild At Heart*, leaving it up to Frost, and an increasingly interested network, to plan the show's future. Ending on a cliffhanger, no nearer to discovering the truth about Laura Palmer's brutal death, left many unsatisfied. But it wouldn't be long before viewers had their answer, and the goose would stop laying its golden eggs.

There's still a huge amount to admire in season two, but it's undeniable that the show lost a significant reason to tune in

"It seared itself into the psyche of unsuspecting viewers and became instantly iconic"

after Leland, under the control of murderous demonic entity Killer BOB, was revealed as Laura's murderer. The episode remains one of the show's most powerful moments, but also its biggest mistake.

After, *Twin Peaks* fever petered out. The show was moved to Saturdays at 10pm, which prevented watercooler chatter, coverage of the Gulf War dominated, ratings plummeted to well under 10 million, from an average of 12-13, and the storylines reflected this reduced interest. The introduction of Windom Earle, an ex-partner of Coop's with a deadly grudge, saw a brief creative flurry during the show's final few weeks, before a series finale that ensured its place in TV history. Lynch returned to direct for the first time in 15 episodes, while Frost co-scripted the cliffhanger-loaded send-off. It's likely the pair knew they would never get the opportunity to tie up the loose ends, which makes their brass-balled decision to go all-out screwy all the braver.

A few years later Lynch would direct a big-screen prequel, *Fire Walk With Me*, but it's a testament to their integrity, and belief in an open-ended, tragic finale that it deliberately dodged answering any questions, instead presenting a horrifying portrait of Laura's final days. The film wasn't well received and as a result *Twin Peaks'* ferocious flame was finally extinguished. They say the light that burns twice as bright burns half as long – in this case, nothing could be truer. 🕯️

Jordan Farley



Audrey made Sherilyn a star.

GAMECHANGERS

THE FACTS

Creator: **Chris Carter**

Lifetime: **1993-2002,**

plus two movies

Number of seasons: **9**

Number of episodes: **202**

The X-Files



Alien autopsies: not for the squeamish.

THE PITCH

Two mismatched FBI agents who may or may not have subconscious feelings for each other set out to debunk/prove the theory that things that go bump in the night really exist. The audience is in on the joke: we know that aliens, werewolves and stretchy serial killers really are out there, but every week our sceptic Agent Scully explains them away like so much rubbish. Elsewhere, an epic Alien Invasion Subplot gets so confusing that not even a mysterious Cigarette-Smoking Man could explain it all, not that he's likely to do that anyway. The truth is out there. Somewhere.

WHY IT'S GREAT

There was something fiendishly sneaky about *The X-Files*. On the outside, it was a normal police procedural show: two law enforcement officials investigated a crime (usually a gruesome murder) each week, bringing the perp to justice at the end (or not). In that way, it was familiar to the vast majority of viewers raised on a diet of *Hill Street Blues*, *Law & Order* and *Cagney &*



Mulder & Scully: millions swooned.



THE LEGACY

Where do we start? *The X-Files* had a ton of fun bringing horror to our screens and inspired gruesome shows such as *Millennium*, *Fringe* (above) and *Supernatural*, plus all sorts of alien-esque gubbins including *First Wave*, *The 4400* and *Dark Skies*. Spin-off *The Lone Gunmen* may not have lasted long but they'll never be forgotten, while stars Duchovny and Anderson are still going strong in their respective (and very different) careers. Rumours of a third movie are doing the rounds as well – while the last *X-Files* big-screen outing wasn't a great success, the brand is still strong enough to milk for more dosh.



The Lone Gunmen before their spin-off.

“The show’s copious amounts of blood, pus and gore were a first for primetime”

denominator: it was aiming for the highest. Its ongoing plot arc – about the kidnapping of Mulder’s little sister and a conspiracy involving a shadowy secret organisation – required some serious brainpower to follow, particularly as the show moved into its later seasons. Viewers were never talked down to; they were expected to be as on the ball as Agents Mulder and Scully. And because of this intelligence, it became the show to boast about watching – far from it being a silly, guilty pleasure, you could be out, loud and proud as an X-Phile. How else could its stars have ended up on the cover of *Rolling Stone*, or being parodied in *The Simpsons*? Even the theme music hit the number two spot in the UK charts!

The X-Files had something most shows can only dream of: coolness. Sure, as time went on and Duchovny eased back his involvement, a certain *je ne sais quoi* was lost. Later seasons featuring Robert Patrick and Annabeth Gish retained their quality but lost their charm. And by the end it can be argued that the show outlived its own coolness, almost falling into parody. But hey, that doesn’t matter. What matters is that while it was on top form, *The X-Files* was the show that made sci-fi so mainstream it became *normal*. Trust this one. 🦇

Jayne Nelson

Lacey. Both leads were attractive, although while David Duchovny’s Fox Mulder was conventionally handsome, Gillian Anderson’s Dana Scully was a rare example of a woman written to show off more than just her looks – her brains counted as well. And the series seemed grounded in reality, despite its outlandish elements; it was shot like any other cop show, with no overt silliness or surrealism (well, up until writer Darin Morgan started having fun, anyway).

All of this combined to make *The X-Files* a hit for one huge reason: it was the sci-fi show people who didn’t think it was cool to watch sci-fi could watch. Outlandish spaceships and Starfleet uniforms too much for you to handle? How about an FBI basement and a couple of business-suited agents? Without even realising it, people were sucked into its deceptively “ordinary” world and soon all things supernatural, paranormal and alien were so trendy they almost became normal. You didn’t have to “believe”, as the show so gleefully urged us to, but you could certainly have fun believing by association.

As for us, the geeks... well, it almost goes without saying that we loved it. Based loosely on the concept of an old ’70s show named *Kolchak: The Night Stalker*, *The X-Files* gleefully rolled out all the horror movie monsters we’ve ever loved while also creating monsters so disgusting they’ve become icons all of their own. The show’s copious amounts of blood, pus and gore were a first for primetime – these were the days before *CSI* autopsies were everyday events, remember – and its message, that you shouldn’t trust the government and that cover-ups existed from the top down, was deliciously enticing. Ingenious scriptwriting (check out “Clyde Bruckman’s Final Repose” or “All Souls”) and compelling villains (check out “The Host” or “Squeeze”) made this a show you’d be foolish to miss – how else could you join in with those conversations at the water cooler in your office the next day?

Most of all, however, there was the sense that *The X-Files* was *smart*. It wasn’t trying to appeal to the lowest common



Anderson ponders. Duchovny pouts.

Buffy The Vampire Slayer

THE FACTS

Creator: Joss Whedon
Lifetime: 1997-2003
Number of seasons: 7
Number of episodes: 144



THE PITCH

A tiny blonde cheerleader confounds sexist expectations by actually being a secret Chosen One: a kick-ass warrior with super-strength born to rid the world of nasty evil creatures, particularly vampires. She promptly falls in love with one (and then two!) of said vampires while saving the world a lot with the help of her awesome geeky friends.

WHY IT'S GREAT

There was nothing quite like *Buffy* on TV (or at the cinema) before it debuted in 1997. A strange hybrid of *Clueless* and *The X-Files*, it knew exactly what it wanted to do and did it without stopping to wonder if it *should*. *Buffy* wanted to make heroes of teenage outcasts; to show that high school (and later, college) was a daily battle to survive; and to prove that women could hold their own in a world filled with men and, oh yes, monsters. (Sometimes the men were worse than the monsters, but hey, that's dating for you.)

Just check out that title, for starters. At no point could anybody have sat down to watch this show without realising it had a sense of humour. There's something inherently funny about the word "Buffy" on its own (with apologies to anybody called Buffy), let alone the phrase "Vampire Slayer". Right from the start this show was cheerfully self-aware and willing to poke a little fun at itself... but it had a lot more fun poking fun at everything else.

Every horror movie cliché was turned on its head, from the opening scenes featuring a seemingly innocent schoolgirl who was revealed to be a bloodsucking monster – almost a cliché itself these days, but *Buffy* made it mainstream – to the evil demon Mayor obsessed with good manners and cleanliness. Joss Whedon and his writing team used irony and sarcasm like a stake, and the show – hell, the *genre* – they created as a result has made the world a richer place.

Buffy had the balls to make the supernatural seem natural. Before this show, for example, nobody had pointed out (at



Buffy gets to the point. Ahem.



It was Buffy's turn for show and tell.



THE LEGACY

Thanks to *Buffy* we've had a slew of young women falling in love with vampires left, right and centre, from Elena in *The Vampire Diaries* to Bella in *Twilight*. So thanks for that, Buffster. On the plus side, we've also seen the rise and rise of Joss Whedon – without *Buffy*, we'd have no *Firefly* (above), *Cabin In The Woods* or an *Avengers* movie. Perish the thought! The post-*Buffy* generation also has a new way of speaking that's heavy on the irony, wit and geekery, with phrases such as "my bad" hitting the mainstream. Just check out shows like *Veronica Mars* (a Whedon favourite), *Teen Wolf* or *Lost Girl* for evidence.

least on primetime TV) the similarity between someone turning into a snarling werewolf for a few days every month and a woman getting her period. As the show wore on we saw horrible creatures of all shapes and sizes acting like humans – holding down jobs, trying to hustle money, attempting to fit in. This was a theme spin-off show *Angel* eventually ran with to a greater extent, but it was the start of a revolutionary way of looking at fantasy. Nothing was black-and-white in *Buffy*'s world: the main villains of season six weren't even supernatural creatures, while some murderous monsters even become good friends (outside of *Angel* and *Spike*, there's also *Anya*). Want another example? While Agents Mulder and Scully were hunting down monsters without giving their feelings a second thought over on Fox, on the (now-defunct) WB Network *Buffy* ended up actually *dating a vampire*. Nuance? You got it!

What made *Buffy* so easy to identify with was its familiarity. By setting it at a high school, Whedon reminded us all of how lucky we were to escape that hell-hole – because come on, who out of all of us ever enjoyed school? Relishing the irony,

"Right from the start this show was cheerfully self-aware and willing to poke a little fun at itself"

he then placed his particular high school on a Hellmouth, making the battle to escape it intact literal. And like a trooper, *Buffy* rose to the challenge – as did her friends. The ensemble nature of the show was another of its strengths, with Xander's wisecrackery and Willow's nerdiness in particular an essential part of the mix.

Buffy made such a huge impact that even those who never watched the series know who she is. It was a cult of intelligent viewers enjoying an intelligent show that looked, from the outside, like nothing of the sort: a B-movie brought to life on a weekly basis with delusions of grandeur that were soundly lived up to. *Buffy* set a bar for other shows to live up to... then snapped it in two just for the hell of it. 🍷

Jayne Nelson



The Scooby Gang line up for battle.

GAMECHANGERS

Battlestar Galactica



Politics, religion and spaceships.

THE FACTS

Creators: **Glen A Larson (original), Ronald D Moore, David Eick**
 Lifetime: **2003-2009**
 Number of seasons: **4**
 Number of episodes: **77**
 (including miniseries and two TV movies)

THE PITCH

The last remaining human survivors of a robot-perpetrated apocalypse are chased across the galaxy as they look for a new home. All this has happened before (and may well happen again), but this time disco kitsch, robot dogs and members of the A-Team are kept to an absolute minimum.

WHY IT'S GREAT

The original *Battlestar Galactica* may not be a classic, but its failings have more to do with the era it was made in than its premise – humanity on the run from evil machines? What's not to like? Spawned to ride the lucrative wave of post-*Star*

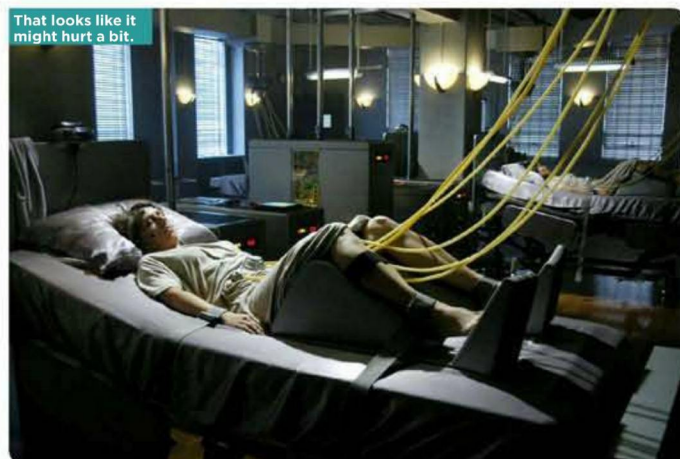
Wars space hype, the show's rapidly dated '70s stylings and one-dimensionally wholesome characters didn't sit well with themes of mass genocide. And with most of the effects budget splurged on the first half a dozen episodes, it lacked the firepower to sustain the drama through its single season.

The remake was different. Masterminded by *Star Trek* veteran Ronald D Moore and future *Bionic Woman* rebooter David Eick (let's not talk about that one), *Battlestar 2.0* was born of a more cynical time – and, crucially, coincided with a golden age of American TV, when the likes of HBO had made long-running, complex arc plots fashionable. *Battlestar* made highbrow critics who'd traditionally have turned their noses up at *Star Trek* take notice, and concede that a show set in outer space could deliver "serious" drama. As *Time* magazine's James Poniewozik so eloquently put it when he named *BSG* the best show of 2005, "Most of you probably think this entry has got to be a joke. The rest of you have actually watched the show."

"Battlestar made critics concede that a show set in outer space could deliver 'serious' drama"



In the cockpit with Apollo.



That looks like it might hurt a bit.



THE LEGACY

What, aside from the fact the Colonials spawned the entire human race? Along with *The Wire* and *The Sopranos*, *Battlestar* was at the forefront of the '00s vanguard of quality TV, proving that it could be just as good as (if not better than) the movies. It also spawned its own shortlived prequel series, *Caprica* (above), while *Blood And Chrome* (another prequel) recently ran on Syfy's website. Ironically, though, *Battlestar* may have hindered genre telly as much as it helped. It never bagged massive ratings and US networks have since shied away from both space and complex arc plots. Sometimes being brilliant isn't enough.

Battlestar was also prepared to point a magnifying glass at the post-9/11 world in a way no drama based on present-day Earth would have dared. Over the course of its run, *BSG* pulled few punches as it examined politically sensitive themes – the enemy within, the torture of prisoners, civil liberties, religious intolerance – with an even hand. It even ventured into morally ambiguous territory where suicide bombers were the nominal good guys.

But *Battlestar* never drew a line between heroes and villains. Every one of its characters (and there were a hell of a lot of them) had their strengths and weaknesses. They made mistakes just as much as they saved the day, and the humans were often as much their own enemy as the Cylons.

Even the Cylons themselves existed in a shades-of-grey world. No longer simple “toasters” hell bent on eliminating every last human from the galaxy, their new humanoid forms had just as many existential issues as their prey. Some of them even evolved into sympathetic (and likeable) characters.

Most importantly, *Battlestar*'s protagonists were believable. With the residents of the 12 colonies attired in contemporary Earth clobber and given Earth names (original series monikers such as Starbuck, Apollo and Boomer were retained as pilots' callsigns), they never felt alien. Indeed, aside from a penchant for the word “frak”, they even talked like us. Being light years from Earth was more or less inconsequential, as

Battlestar wasn't really about being in space – it was a character-based drama that just happened to be set among the stars, with the crew just as likely to face problems with food shortages and terminal illness as they were with interplanetary dogfights.

That's not to say that the sci-fi stuff was an afterthought. From the Colonial Vipers to the Cylon Centurions, the reboot took the designs of the original series and updated them for the 21st century. It was subtle refinement, akin to the way the new *Mini* took the best bits of a design classic and made them feel fresh and new. The tech, meanwhile, was futuristic without being implausible. No lasers here, just bullets and nukes – the biggest stretch here was the (dramatically necessary) FTL “jump” drives.

Like all the best TV shows, *Battlestar* knew it had to evolve to maintain the drama. So while later seasons eventually lost the urgency of the early non-stop cat-and-mouse, they expanded the series' mythology, upped the spirituality and focused more on the quest to find Earth. Some of the show's edge was lost as the third season progressed, but it did at least get to end on its own terms. The optimistic conclusion may have divided the faithful, but after four seasons of pretty much non-stop misery, we sure as hell deserved some release! 🍷

Richard Edwards

The show was ace: so say we all!



THE FACTS

Creators: Frank Darabont
(based on the comic book by Robert Kirkman, Tony Moore, and Charlie Adlard)

Lifetime: 2010-present

Number of seasons: 3

(to date)

Number of episodes: 19

(prior to season three, currently airing on FX)

The Walking Dead

THE PITCH

Too-nice-for-his-own good sheriff's deputy Rick Grimes is struck down by a criminal's bullet and awakes in a world overrun by zombies. Reunited with his wife and son, he grows a spine, slays his best friend (and his wife's lover), and leads a small band of survivors through a harrowing post-apocalyptic landscape.

WHY IT'S GREAT

Though it's barely two years old, *The Walking Dead* has enjoyed a success that's not only unprecedented but, a mere half decade ago, was inconceivable. For when it debuted in the autumn of 2010, there had never been a mainstream horror drama serial that was a certifiable hit on American television (*Supernatural* came close, but even that stalwart enjoys a niche audience), let alone one that packed the same

level of viscera as most contemporary horror cinema. The fact that *The Walking Dead* focused on zombies, often the bloodiest of genre subjects, as demonstrated in decades past by outré filmmakers like George Romero and Lucio Fulci, suggested a brief run. But from its pilot's opening scene, in which a just-revived Rick Grimes (Andrew Lincoln) is forced to shoot a little girl in the head, *The Walking Dead* – based on writer Robert Kirkman's hit ongoing monthly comic book – has refused to compromise its bleak vision. It's a vision informed in part by 9/11, in which a sudden unexpected force has decimated civilisation, and one that eerily anticipated the Occupy Movement, in which a disenfranchised class so outnumbers the privileged that its dominance appears only natural.

First season showrunner Frank Darabont (who began his filmmaking career scripting genre favourites like *A Nightmare On Elm Street 3: Dream Warriors* and the 1988 *Blob* remake) brought his love of examining the human psyche under pressure – most evident in his Stephen King adaptation *The Mist* – and his interest, shared with King, in lean, sweaty tales of everyman protagonists on all-too-terrifying road trips to Kirkman's "zombie movie that never ends". Although Darabont was let go after season one, executive producer Glen Mazzara picked up the reigns in season two and enriched the show's characterisations while improving its momentum. Mazzara was aided by executive producers Gale Anne Hurd (a legend for producing *Aliens* and co-writing/producing *The Terminator*) and Kirkman himself, whose scripts for the show – along with his *Walking Dead* spin-off novel *The Rise Of The Governor* – prove his talent should not be confined to one medium. The fourth behind-the-scenes pillar of the show is Greg Nicotero, the zombie make-up effects wizard who began his career on Romero's *Day Of The Dead*, and whose contributions to *The Walking Dead* proved so significant he was quickly promoted to director and co-executive producer.

It's worth comparing *The Walking Dead*'s cast to those of other American ensemble genre shows. Take *Lost*, for example – another huge hit about a group of fiercely determined survivors. Like the original *Star Trek*, it featured just one character (Sawyer) from the American South. *The Walking Dead*, however, is decidedly Southern in almost every respect. Rick, his partner/rival Shane (Jon Bernthal), farmer/doctor Hershel (Scott Wilson), and season three antagonist



The zombie army advances.

Not for the faint-hearted, this one.





Just about any weapon will do.



THE LEGACY

As successful as it is, *The Walking Dead* is still a relatively young show, and so its influence, for the most part, is yet to be felt. But it's interesting to note the increase in horror-themed programming in both this and last year's new shows, from *American Horror Story* (above) to *The Following* to *666 Park Avenue*, with presumably even more disturbing (and violent) fare, such as *Bates Motel* or *Hannibal*, on their way in 2013. Meanwhile, it's hard not to view other post-apocalyptic sagas of bands on the run, like *Falling Skies* and *Revolution*, through the lens of *The Walking Dead*'s success.

The Governor (David Morrissey) all possess deep Southern accents of the kind rarely heard on TV. It's rare for a US show to identify itself with this region, often stereotypically portrayed as a land of outlaws and rednecks, and rarer still for genre TV fare to do so. But Kirkman himself is a Southerner, and the fact that the show adheres so closely to his comic's environment speaks volumes about the clarity of its vision.

Not that *The Walking Dead* is entirely devoid of rednecks. Daryl Dixon (Norman Reedus), one of its most popular characters, possesses many less-than-savoury traits. But Dixon is also one of the series' most three-dimensional characters, and some of *The Walking Dead*'s most memorable moments ironically involve this deceptively crude crossbowman's growth in a perpetual, proverbial valley of death. Daryl also serves as the perfect example of the show's concern with duality, offering tenderness and brutality in equal measure, and suggesting that both are necessary in order to reclaim what's left of the human soul in the wake of the unthinkable.

Joseph McCabe



"There had never been a mainstream horror drama serial that was a certifiable hit on US TV"



Rick makes a break for it.



Hoax

Words • Steve O'Brien

In 1992, BBC One shocked a nation with faux-haunted house doc *Ghostwatch*. Twenty years on, we find out how Auntie made things go bump in the night



© BBC Photo Library

The headlines the next day weren't quite what the Beeb had hoped for. "Viewers Blast BBC 'Sick' Ghost Hoax" screamed one. "TV Ghosts Drove Boy To Suicide" lied another. Virtually every red-top was in full-on splutter mode as the ashes settled after the BBC's latest *Screen One* drama on 31 October 1992.

Screen One was the BBC's one-shot TV movie strand between 1989 and 1993, and it wasn't used to this sort of tabloid controversy. But then *Ghostwatch* wasn't your average *Screen One* drama.

Those who had been paying close attention would have noticed a writing byline, which flashed up for a split second at the beginning, crediting Stephen Volk. But many didn't, and sat down to this Michael Parkinson-fronted investigation into paranormal activity without realising that they were watching a scripted drama, recorded weeks before.

But not all those hoodwinked into thinking they were watching a live BBC investigative reality show, that would eventually descend into a hurricane of paranormal madness, were quite as apoplectic as those that shouted down the lines of the BBC switchboard that night. The children of *Ghostwatch* carry their happy trauma with them proudly.

"No one yet has said to me, with anger in their eyes, 'I really resent what you did! I want to make you suffer for what you did to me!' recalls Stephen Volk, talking exclusively to *SFX* on the lasting legacy of his 20-year-old drama.

"They invariably come up to me and say, 'I couldn't sleep for a week!' In fact, someone said to me last year, 'I couldn't walk past the door at the bottom of the stairs for six months!' But it was quite light-hearted – he appreciated it, despite it having a profound effect on him."

Most one-off dramas are done and dusted with after their first broadcast. None of



The Ghostwatch crew arrive.



It's just like *Going Live*. Kinda.



Interviewing worried residents.

Ghostwatch's *Screen One* peers have the patronage of the BFI or have enjoyed so many festival screenings and academic dissections. And yet it's a programme the BBC seems faintly embarrassed about now. It wasn't the BBC who released it on DVD and it's never enjoyed a repeat on any of its channels. Despite it being awarded the luxury of a *Radio Times* cover that Halloween week in 1992, the tabloid-whipped outcry after its screening suggests the BBC then decided to swiftly bury *Ghostwatch*, or at least pretend it never happened.

"When the BBC batted down the hatches," reflects Volk, "It was not only unhelpful to us, but unhelpful to the BBC. I think the BBC could have minimised the fallout had they played it differently. That's my feeling."

FRIGHT NIGHT

For the first 45 or so minutes that October night, *Ghostwatch* played out like any other reality show of the early '90s. Fronted by the cosily familiar Parky, with former DJ Mike Smith in the studio taking viewers' calls, and Sarah Greene and an as-himself Craig Charles on Outside Broadcast duties, *Ghostwatch* purported to be a real investigation into poltergeist happenings at a house in Northolt, London.

Initially, it looked innocuously normal – lots of studio experts, phone-in callers and larky OB hijinks. Perhaps the eagle-brained might have noticed a faint actorly-ness behind the members of the public, but that's easy to fuzz out of your consciousness when it's the BBC behind it all.



Sarah Greene on OB duties.



Taking (fake) calls in the studio.



Who wouldn't believe this man?

"The more I think about it," Volk says, "it was all tied up in the fact that it was a BBC production and how people feel about Auntie. People think the BBC is something they can trust, so when it fools you... that really pulled the rug out from under people. Somebody asked me last year, 'How do you think it would have been had it been produced for Channel Four?' But the fact that it was the BBC is integral to it. You expect Channel Four to be subversive, but you don't expect that of the BBC. It was better coming from the BBC."

DEMON BIRTH

Ghostwatch was born from a series Stephen Volk had approached the BBC with at the beginning of the '90s. Conceived as a six-part supernatural series in the vein of *Edge Of Darkness*, the Beeb swiftly nixed the project. But Volk salvaged an idea he'd had for the series' sixth episode, which would have revolved around a live TV broadcast, and presented it to the BBC for their *Screen One* slot. But, as he quickly found out, telling a story through what was masquerading to be a non-fiction format proved tricky.

"It was quite tough because I had to get into a different mindset," says Volk. "I had to think of it as a drama, figure it out in terms of the backstory and the characters and incidents, and then the actual telling of it had to be completely different. I've done screenplays that I've then played with in the theatre, and vice versa, and it's very interesting when you switch from one medium to another, because it reveals different things



"It was all tied up in the fact that it was a BBC show. People think the BBC is something they can trust, so when it fools you... that really pulled the rug out from under people"

about the story – instead of showing that scene where the mother is trapped for a few seconds under the stairs she has to tell you.

"We were always asking ourselves, 'If they were really doing this, what would they do and what would happen?' Well, nothing much would happen for a long time, if ever. So in order to prolong that conceit I wanted to use the first half to just give them information – about the technology, the heat sensors, the backstory, what happened before with the family – just lining up the information that you're going to undermine in the second half. That was the general strategy on how to pull it off."

Volk was raised on the sci-fi of Nigel Kneale and the ghost stories of MR James – once a firm staple of the BBC's Christmas output. And there's a clear thread of influence between Kneale's stuff, particularly 1972's *The Stone Tape*,

and the fusion of the supernatural and technology in *Ghostwatch*.

"There were two intentions for *Ghostwatch*," Volk reflects. "I wanted to follow that tradition of ghost stories on TV that I loved. I wanted to make something really scary and supernatural for an audience that was like me. But secondly the climate of the time in the early '90s, was 999 and *Hospital Watch* and those kinds of things. And the thing about those shows was they sometimes had recreations of events using actors, and they'd use dramatic music. And at the same time drama programmes were beginning to use hand-held cameras, so there was this vibe going on where non-fiction was starting to use fiction conventions and fiction non-fiction conventions."

Despite the BBC's then queasiness towards fantasy fiction, Volk butted heads with the



Parky stays calm in the studio.



Craig Charles starts to sweat.



Events take a sinister turn...



There's something behind you!

"I value the idea of watching something that really shakes you up. I find that exciting. But the people who provided barriers were worried about people who'd be upset by it"

corporation less on the supernatural content of *Ghostwatch*, and more on the "as live" conceit. The idea of a drama disguised as a news programme had been done before, notably in ITV's *Alternative 3* in 1977, which – as part of a bona fide non-fiction series called *Science Report* – supposedly uncovered plans to make the Moon and Mars habitable in the event of climate change. But *Alternative 3* was broadcast on April Fool's Day, an easy get-out clause against any accusations that the network was cynically trying to mislead people. *Ghostwatch* had no such excuse.

SCREEN TEST

Marshalling *Ghostwatch* to the screen with the illusion intact and with the degree of verisimilitude the creative team behind it wanted wasn't easy. The BBC seemed nervy at allowing such trusted faces as Michael Parkinson, Mike Smith and Sarah Greene into this untried genre.

"The BBC asked, could we do it without real presenters, with actors pretending to be presenters?" splutters Volk. "I think I'd have said, 'Don't be so fucking ridiculous!' but there are more politically astute people than me to deal with that. They can negotiate those stupid suggestions. To me, that kind of thing completely negates the whole reason for doing it. I mean, don't you get it?"

"But in an organisation like the BBC, people have jobs. I don't have a job, so I can't lose a job, but people within it are always looking over their shoulder and protecting themselves. Those people do have a sense of responsibility to the audience. I have a responsibility to the audience, but it's different. I value the idea of watching something that really shakes you up.

I find that exciting. But the people who provided barriers were worried about people who would be upset by it, and you can't say they're wrong and I'm right.

"It was just a kind of tussle. They were worried about the wider audience, whereas I think I was making something for someone like me. I know plenty of people like me, and they want stuff that I want on the box. I don't think they should be denied genre stuff."

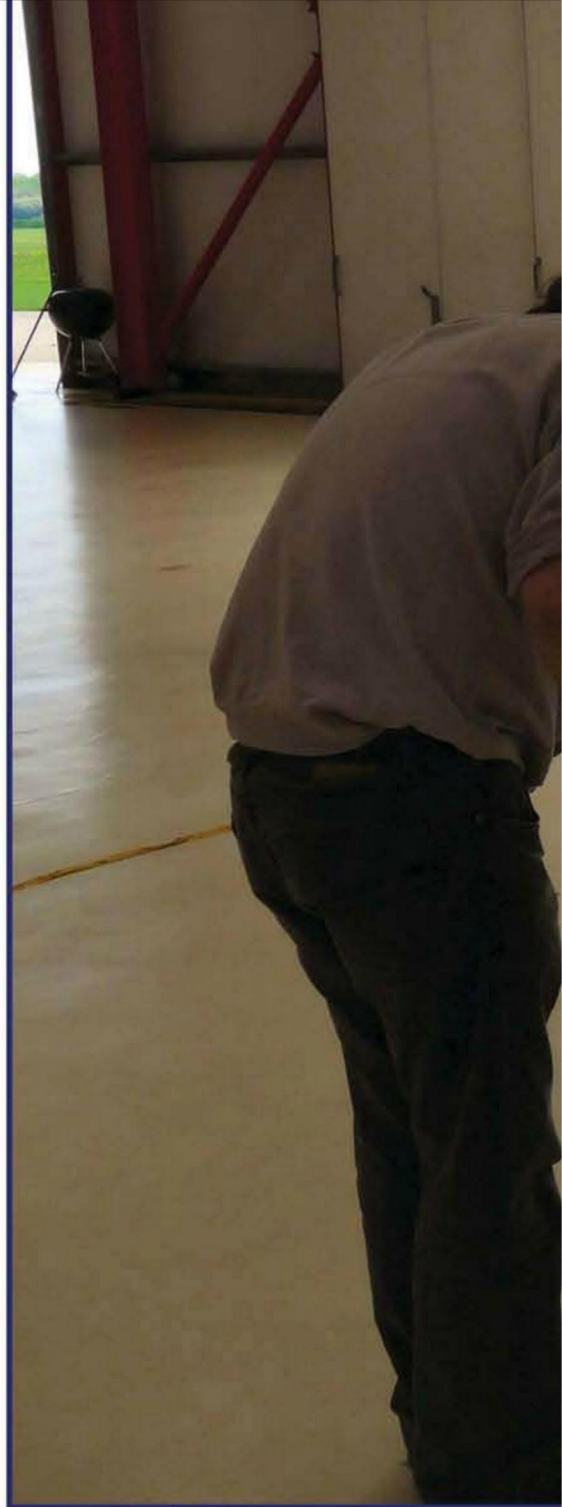
REALITY BITES

Ghostwatch packed a powerful punch in 1992, mainly because as a piece of television it was scorchingly current. All the grammar of the reality telly of 20 years ago is there, to the point of looking almost quaint now. But Volk is not sure whether a show like *Ghostwatch* could even work in 2012, let alone be commissioned.

"I think the world has moved on so rapidly in terms of the media and the way people share information. People are far more savvy and questioning in terms of what they see," he says.

"If you see a spaceship or Big Foot on YouTube you immediately dismiss it – there's almost a sub-culture of hoaxing going on. So I think it was the right thing at the right time. A few years later I think it would have been more difficult to pull off. Later on you'd have haunted house things with the Happy Mondays or the cast of *Coronation Street* – I think that's more what you might do now. You wouldn't actually bother going through the drama department, you'd just set it up as a reality TV format. I'm not sure you could go back to the innocence of that."

"In those days, we didn't have the BBC Policy Unit or Ed Pol [Editorial Policy] as they call it, which you have to run everything by," he says.

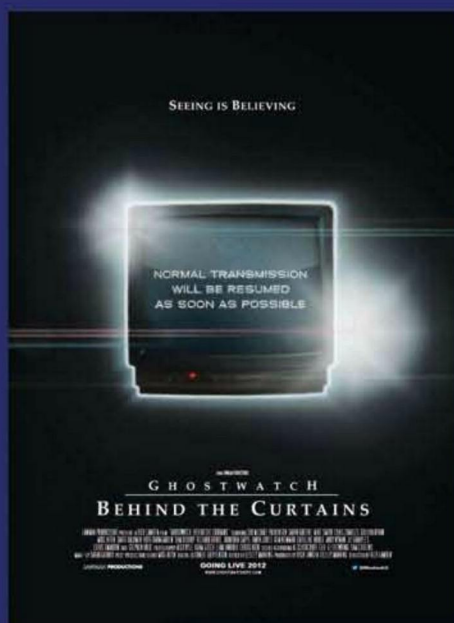


Nervous laughter from the house.

"It's this almost Orwellian department and I'm fairly sure if Ed Pol had existed 20 years ago we wouldn't have been able to make it. It would have been their job to make us not do it. When people from the BBC occasionally come to a screening they say, 'How did this get through the system?!' And I just say, 'Well, the system was different then!'"



***Behind The Curtains*, the documentary that's reawakening old ghosts**



Ghostwatch: Behind The Curtains has been a five-year labour of love for filmmaker Richard Lawden. But it's been brewing for nearly 20. Lawden was one of the people who watched *Ghostwatch* in 1992 and it crept the hell out of him, and now, two decades on, he's in the final stages of completing the definitive documentary about the drama.

A meeting with Stephen Volk in Bristol sealed the idea of creating a feature-length documentary about the programme, and Volk introduced Lawden to *Ghostwatch*'s director Lesley Manning. Instead of just popping up as another talking head, though, Manning became closely involved with the project.

"I'd always wanted to see *Ghostwatch* documented because there's been so much cover-up – so much stuff around it," Manning tells *SFX*. "I wanted everybody to say their bit. And the upside about me is that I knew everybody."

"Everybody wanted the same thing, to do a linear walkthrough of *Ghostwatch*," adds Lawden, "how they got involved, how it was made and their feelings about it."

"I think it's really, really good," says Volk, who's only just seen the (nearly) finished film. "What's fascinating for me is hearing all these other people's perspectives. I knew what my point of view was when we went through it all, but to hear the executive producer and other people's point of view was very interesting."

Lawden and Manning are currently hawking *Behind The Curtains* around, looking for the best distribution deal. They approached BBC Four, but the corporation that seems to have wiped its hands of *Ghostwatch* unsurprisingly turned them down, and they're hoping now that the documentary will find its audience on DVD. You can read more about it at <http://www.ghostwatchbbc.com>.



Intros

Words • Jordan Farley

A good title sequence can transport you to another galaxy. A bad one feels like a waste of 60 seconds. We take a look at some of the best (and worst) to see which credits deserve the most, er, credit



The Twilight Zone 1959-64

SHOW & TELL: It's a show about weird things floating through space while some guy reads cod-philosophy, right?

EYE CANDY: There's endless possibility in that abstract imagery.

SOUND EFFECTS: Marius Constant's iconic four note motif didn't arrive until season four, but Bernard Herrmann's eerie theme also

evokes a sense of eternal darkness.

RELEVANCE: The only way to sell an anthology show is to evoke a mood, which this sequence does wonderfully.

CREDIT RATING: 7/10



Thunderbirds 1965-66

SHOW & TELL: So it stars a load of puppets called Tracy who pilot spaceships and things explode a lot? Got it.

EYE CANDY: It looks FAB! Particularly the action-packed first 30 seconds.

SOUND EFFECTS: The iconic opening countdown and Barry Gray's triumphant march are arguably the best bits.

RELEVANCE: International Rescue isn't explained, but otherwise this tells you everything you need to know about those heroic supermarionettes.

CREDIT RATING: 9/10



Batman 1966-68

SHOW & TELL: From the titles we know it's a cartoon where people get punched in the face a lot. Right? Oh...

EYE CANDY: The animation, though basic, is vibrant and full of fan-pleasing appearances from famous villains.

SOUND EFFECTS: The theme is a proper annoying ear-worm, while the horns that

accompany each Sok! Pow! and Zock! are synonymous with cartoon violence.

RELEVANCE: The titles make the show's comic book feel very clear from the off.

CREDIT RATING: 6/10



The Prisoner 1967-68

SHOW AND TELL: They're three minutes long! What don't you know about the show after watching these titles?

EYE CANDY: Resigning in style, the car, Rover... there's nothing that isn't marvellous.

SOUND EFFECTS: The same goes for Ron Grainer's thunderous, gloriously extravagant theme tune.

RELEVANCE: Sets up the premise so well that first-time viewers could watch any episode and understand, and has enough depth that it's still being analysed by fans.

CREDIT RATING: 10/10



Buck Rogers In The 25th Century 1979-81

SHOW AND TELL: Thanks to season one's handy

voiceover man we know exactly what Buck is doing in the 25th century.

EYE CANDY: The sight of Buck falling into the vortex will sear itself onto your brain.

SOUND EFFECTS: Stu "Battlestar Galactica"

Phillips's theme music complements the title sequence's narrative perfectly.

RELEVANCE: The titles capture the spirit of the show. And the cheese.

CREDIT RATING: 8/10



Lost 2004-10

SHOW AND TELL: In short, it's too short. A modern trend that needs to die.

EYE CANDY: This is a joke, right? Some kid

could have knocked this sequence out in Microsoft Paint.

SOUND EFFECTS: Ooh, moody. It gives a good feel for the show, but only if you know it and love it already.

RELEVANCE: Not relevant at all. They are lost, admittedly. But we don't remember any flying letters on the island, and where are all the unanswered questions?

CREDIT RATING: 1/10



Game Of Thrones 2011-present

SHOW AND TELL: We don't meet any characters, but the map symbolises the show's shifting political landscape fittingly.

EYE CANDY: The stylised animation is remarkable, and better yet the map changes to reflect the show's narrative.

SOUND EFFECTS: Rousing and evocative. Plus you won't stop humming it for weeks.

RELEVANCE: There aren't anywhere near enough boobs or severed heads, but otherwise it does a faultless job of opening the door to Westeros.

CREDIT RATING: 8/10



Just Visiting

Travel agent •
Sarah Dobbs

A rough guide to the planets of the universe



Vulcan

AS SEEN IN: Star Trek

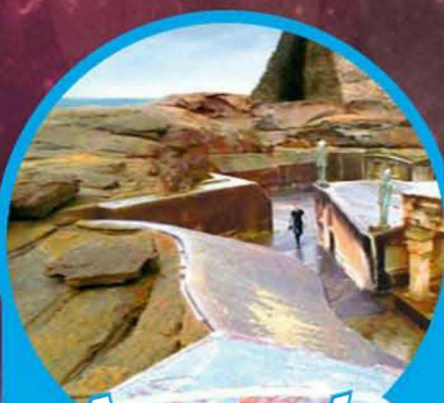
CLIMATE: Similar to Earth, but with higher gravity and a thinner atmosphere.

ATTRACTIONS: Various ancient religious sites, as well as natural phenomena such as volcanoes.

LOCAL CUSTOMS: Vulcan society is based on logic and honesty. If staying with a Vulcan family, note that guests are expected to prepare breakfast for their hosts.

SIGNIFICANT MOMENTS: The planet has a long history of contact with other races and joined the Coalition Of Planets in 2155.

ESSENTIAL ADVICE: The planet's low oxygen levels and stronger gravity will make visitors feel tired and out of breath more quickly than normal, so don't plan anything strenuous.



Arnessk

AS SEEN IN: Farscape

CLIMATE: Mild, except during summer.

ATTRACTIONS:

Archaeological digs, which may potentially unearth legendary temples.

LOCAL CUSTOMS: None; the planet is completely and utterly uninhabitable.

SIGNIFICANT MOMENTS: A shift in the planet's magnetic field about 1,000 years ago resulted in a mass exodus.

ESSENTIAL ADVICE: The digs around the ancient Eidelon civilisation are endlessly fascinating, and there's important work to be done here, but summers on Arnessk are quite literally scorching. Magnetic radiation on the planet kills all life on the surface, so it's important that you visit out of season.



Persephone

AS SEEN IN: Firefly

CLIMATE: Pleasant.

ATTRACTIONS: Stately homes, charming abbeys, and a truly fantastic shopping district.

LOCAL CUSTOMS:

Citizens of Persephone hold old-fashioned values and duels, fought with swords, aren't uncommon.

SIGNIFICANT MOMENTS:

Persephone was a stronghold for the Independents in the Unification War (which as we all know was ultimately won by the Alliance).

ESSENTIAL ADVICE:

Although the planet is largely civilised and prosperous, it also has a large criminal underclass, so beware of pickpockets. For hitchhikers, the Eavesdown Docks are a good place to find a new ride.

No matter how well-equipped your spaceship is, every intergalactic adventurer needs to feel solid ground under their feet at some point. But since every planet is different, it's important to choose a destination wisely; even if the Prime Directive isn't a consideration, just landing on the closest lump of rock with breathable air could have disastrous consequences.

In order to help the space-weary traveller make an informed decision about where to park their ship, we've put together this guide to some

Just landing on the closest lump of rock with air could have disastrous consequences

of the more interesting (and mostly harmless) worlds to visit. These 10 planets offer a range of different holiday experiences; there's something to suit everyone, whether you're looking for adventure, culture, impressive scenery, or just a good home-cooked curry...



Celestis

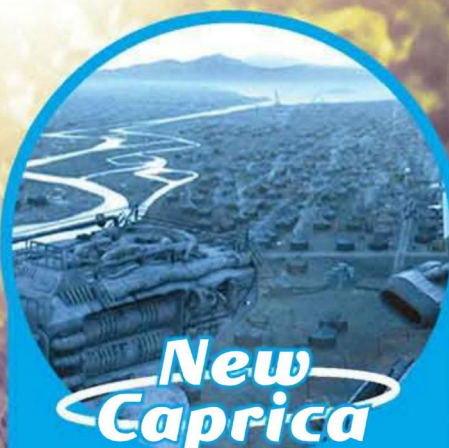
AS SEEN IN: Stargate SG-1
CLIMATE: Hot.

ATTRACTIONS: The City of Celestis, a huge gold fortress, is unmissable.

LOCAL CUSTOMS: Celestis was once home to the Ori, an ascended race who manifested in flames. They demanded respect and worship from everyone else around them, and unbelievers were put to death. However, since the Ori left, the planet is much more relaxed.

SIGNIFICANT MOMENTS: The Ori launched a crusade in the early 21st century, and planned to rule the entire Milky Way. Thankfully, they were defeated by the Ancients, who then forced them off Celestis.

ESSENTIAL ADVICE: Pack sunscreen, and be wary of overly religious types.



New Caprica

AS SEEN IN: Battlestar Galactica

CLIMATE: Harsh and cold.

ATTRACTIONS: The planet's location, hidden within a dense nebula, makes it difficult to find – so it's the perfect place for anyone looking to get off the grid.

LOCAL CUSTOMS: Drug-taking is fairly common: one of the planet's few indigenous plants, the New Caprican Leaf, has pleasant mood-altering effects when smoked.

SIGNIFICANT MOMENTS: New Caprica was settled after the fall of the Twelve Colonies of Kobol; shortly afterwards, it was also occupied by Cylons.

ESSENTIAL ADVICE: Make sure to bring home comforts with you, as New Caprica is a fairly primitive world.



Talax

AS SEEN IN: Star Trek: Voyager

CLIMATE: Comfortable.

ATTRACTIONS: Pleasant scenery, friendly people.

LOCAL CUSTOMS: Talaxians are a hospitable race who love company and have a great sense of humour. Expect to be told lots of long and convoluted stories.

SIGNIFICANT MOMENTS: Talax was invaded by the Haakonians in 2355. The Talaxians eventually surrendered, and many of them escaped to set up colonies far away from their home planet.

ESSENTIAL ADVICE: Talaxian food tends to be extremely spicy, but water is scarce in this sector so be very careful what you order. The luxurious Paxau Resort is worth a visit but it's extremely expensive.



Albian

AS SEEN IN: Blake's 7
CLIMATE: Cold.

ATTRACTIONS: Lots of snow and ice.

LOCAL CUSTOMS: Albians don't react well to external attempts to exert authority over their world.

SIGNIFICANT MOMENTS: When the Federation attempted to take control of the planet, the Albians resisted – and were almost exterminated in the process.

ESSENTIAL ADVICE: The population of Albion is concentrated in settlements around the equator, as the rest of the planet is too cold to support life. However, that does mean the planet offers an awful lot of untouched ice and snow, particularly around the poles, which may appeal to keen skiers and brave snowball fighters.



Skaro

AS SEEN IN: Doctor Who
CLIMATE: Similar to Earth, with added acid rain.

ATTRACTIONS: The petrified forest, mercury geysers and, reportedly, fountains of liquid gold.

LOCAL CUSTOMS: Fighting and creating mutants, for the most part.

SIGNIFICANT MOMENTS: The Thousand Year War fought between the Kaleds and Thals left the planet devastated, but created some opportunities for extreme tourism in the process.

ESSENTIAL ADVICE: Many of Skaro's natural features have been altered or destroyed by widespread warfare, leaving an exciting landscape packed with dangerous seas, swamps and lakes. Probably best to avoid the Dalek City though.



Minbar

AS SEEN IN: Babylon 5
CLIMATE: Cool.

ATTRACTIONS: Crystalline mountains and palaces carved from crystal.

LOCAL CUSTOMS: The Minbari are very religious, and their society forms a fairly strict caste system – each strata of which has its own language. Minbari society runs on rituals and manners; lying, especially, is considered a very serious offence.

SIGNIFICANT MOMENTS: The Minbari have been involved in several major wars, including the First Shadow War, when the race was instrumental in driving back the Shadows.

ESSENTIAL ADVICE: Wrap up warm – and make sure to swot up on the intricacies of Minbari etiquette before visiting.



Decapod 10

AS SEEN IN: Futurama
CLIMATE: Warm and wet.

ATTRACTIONS: The numerous sandy beaches.

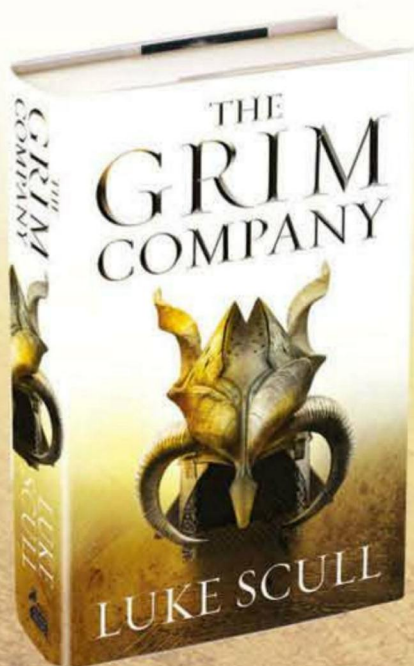
LOCAL CUSTOMS: The lobster-like Decapodians take their honour extremely seriously and will invoke Claw-Plach, a fight to the death, to settle disputes. Don't cheat at Scrabble if your opponent is a Decapodian.

SIGNIFICANT MOMENTS: In 3003, the Decapodians successfully invaded Earth.
ESSENTIAL ADVICE: Visitors should make sure to check their calendars before booking. Due to its unusual gravitational tides, Decapod 10 has two different "yearly" cycles, making visiting during the annual mating season inadvisable.



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Killed Off

Investigating officer • Tom Hawker

Traumatised by Ianto? Lose your mind when Ned lost his head? We reopen the files on TV's most emotional and brutal screen deaths...

NAME **Eddard Stark**

SHOW Game Of Thrones
EPISODE "Baelor"
CIRCUMSTANCES

The Hand of the King agrees to "admit" to trumped up charges of treason and acknowledge the vile brat Joffrey as king, in return for a harsh life beyond the Wall with the Night's Watch and to save his captive daughter's life. Humiliated, stripped of his honour and abused by the baying crowds – and all in front of his girls – the broken Stark's nearly as surprised as we are when Joffrey goes back on his word and Ned's noggin is sliced off to join the Starks' governess Mordane (and George Bush) on the battlement spikes.

AFTERMATH The civil war between Houses Stark and Lannister becomes a certainty; King Joffrey somehow manages to become even more slappable.

DID HE COME BACK? Nope.



NAME **Charlie Pace**

SHOW Lost
EPISODE "Through The Looking Glass"
CIRCUMSTANCES

The big blue calls for ertwhile rocker Charlie, who sacrifices himself to save Desmond and the rest of the group, locking the door of the underwater chamber before it floods. His final act is to warn Desmond that they're being set up. In a show filled with shocking, powerful deaths, Charlie's was probably its greatest hit. And hey, we'll always have those Drive Shaft mix tapes to remember the drug snorting scamp by.

AFTERMATH Well, it's not Penny's boat, but that's not the half of it.

DID HE COME BACK? Charlie cameoed as the ghost of Island future, telling Hurley to return, though he was back to a full-timer during the final season's afterlife scenario.



NAME **Ianto Jones**

SHOW Torchwood
EPISODE "Children Of Earth"
CIRCUMSTANCES

"Don't forget me," Ianto begs Captain Jack Harkness as they drift out of consciousness in each other's arms. Having stormed the 456's stronghold at Thames House, Jones is felled by a virus alongside his boss and boyfriend. Unfortunately for Ianto, he doesn't share his fella's immortality, meaning that Jack will be waking up alone for a long while to come; inarguably the biggest wrinkle on the face of Boe.

AFTERMATH Ianto's sad demise comes just as his relationship seems to be on the cusp of becoming something more mature, and results in propelling a broken Jack towards darker, more desperate acts.

DID HE COME BACK? Nope, 'fraid not.



NAME **Joyce Summers**

SHOW Buffy The Vampire Slayer
EPISODE "I Was Made To Love You"/"The Body"
CIRCUMSTANCES

Buffy wanders home only to find her dear old mother cold, blue and staring lifelessly out from the sofa having suffered an aneurysm: the Slayer might be able to save the world (a lot), but there's nothing in her training to deal with this. In a show strewn with corpses, Joyce was its first death by natural causes, and the most emotionally brutal by far.

AFTERMATH One of TV's best hours of drama as shock, numbness and grief descends on the Scoobies; Buffy is forced to grow up and accept that a normal life is beyond her.

DID SHE COME BACK? Nope, although, in one form or another, she does turn up to torment the gang again.



NAME Dale Horvath

SHOW The Walking Dead
EPISODE**"Judge, Jury, Executioner"****CIRCUMSTANCES**

Having spent the episode arguing against killing a captive raider, the gang's voice of reason finds himself disemboweled by a stray zombie. The bitter irony is that it's the same walker that young Carl – hopped up on the group's murderous verdict – had purposely provoked but then didn't tell anyone about. The only thing more stomach-churning than seeing this nice old man surrounded by his own gizzards is the disorientated look on his face as Daryl puts him out of his misery. Quite literally gut-wrenching, and one hell of an exit for *The Walking Dead's* most genial survivor.

AFTERMATH Carl experiences a suitable bout of guilt; the group recovers its humanity.

DID HE COME BACK? Not yet.



NAME Roj Blake

SHOW Blake's 7
EPISODE "Blake"**CIRCUMSTANCES**

The Gauda Prime massacre, what a bloodbath! The crew of the Scorpio find themselves surrounded by a platoon of Federation Troops: surely they can't shoot their way out of this one? Oh. Still, at least they go out all guns blazing. The kicker though is that seconds earlier it was the crew themselves gunning down their old boss, Blake, mistakenly believing his bounty hunter masquerade. Curse you Blake, and your modest acting talents and penchant for fake facial scars. You fooled them all too damned well, man.

AFTERMATH Blasts. The end credits. The end.

DID HE COME BACK? He might have done if the series had been recommissioned: a cliffhanger that didn't hang on.



NAME The Tenth Doctor

SHOW Doctor Who
EPISODE**"The End Of Time"****CIRCUMSTANCES**

In a dangerous world of Daleks, Cybermen and walking Bertie Bassetts, what eventually did for the Tenth Doctor was a bumbling OAP – poor Wilfred Mott having managed to lock himself in a radiation chamber; the good Gallifreyan inevitably sacrificing himself by absorbing the radiation, kickstarting the regeneration process. Cue glowing hands, a large amount of dangerous looking explosions and an almighty farewell victory lap that gave *Return Of The King* a run for its money. Does anybody else still miss David Tennant like we do?

AFTERMATH "Geronimo".

DID HE COME BACK? Well, technically it's not a death but it certainly felt like one. At least we got the mighty Matt Smith to make up for it...



NAME Maddy Ferguson

SHOW Twin Peaks
EPISODE**"Lonely Souls"****CIRCUMSTANCES**

"It is happening... again." The record repeats as poor Maddy discovers who murdered her infamous cousin: Laura Palmer's own father Leland, under possession of evil Black Lodge resident Killer BOB. The ghastly contrast between the leering, sadistic BOB – shot under a spotlight and shown in slow motion (*that* sound) – and the chilling reality that Maddy's under a sustained psychosexual assault by her trusted uncle make it even more remarkable that this snuck onto primetime TV.

AFTERMATH Maddy gets the wrapped-in-plastic treatment; Leland is uncovered; *Twin Peaks* gets boring.

DID SHE COME BACK? Nope, she didn't even return in dreams.





LIBERATOR

As British TV's most famous septet are reunited for Big Finish's new audio dramas, we catch up with the original *Blake's 7*

Words • Stephen Jewell



It's impossible to avoid the fact that sci-fi history is in the making. For the first time in more than three decades, the original cast of *Blake's 7* have gathered together, here to record Big Finish's latest audio adventure, "Warship". "It's just so exciting!" declares producer David Richardson. "When I walked in this morning and saw everybody sitting around drinking tea, it really did seem like a momentous occasion."

"Warship" is Big Finish's most ambitious outing yet. Written by Peter Anghelides, it is not just an audiobook but also a full-blown audio experience that makes the most of its impressive list of contributors. "In the TV series, they'd often focus on just one character in a particular episode but as we've got all the principal cast, I wanted to make sure that there was something meaningful in the script for all of them,"

Anghelides explains. "That was the challenge in doing this for the first time – and also to make it meaningful at a conventional episode length."

Set between the final episode of the second series and series three's opener, "Warship" sets out to answer many previously unexplained questions. "The intriguing thing about *Blake's 7* is that between series B and C, a lot happened," explains Richardson. "There was a massive intergalactic war and Blake and Jenna, who were mainstays of the crew, disappeared from the *Liberator*. We never saw any of those events and this allows us to fill in those gaps. It tells the story that leads up to [series three opener] "Aftermath", in which we saw the aftermath of the war. This is actually the war that leads into that story."

"Warship" will be released in February 2013.



**GARETH THOMAS**

The question that everybody always asks is, "Was Blake a freedom fighter or a terrorist?" to which I would respond; "Depends on whose side you're on". al-Qaeda wouldn't call themselves terrorists. I'd prefer to think that

"Was Blake a freedom fighter or a terrorist? Depends on whose side you're on"

**PAUL DARROW**

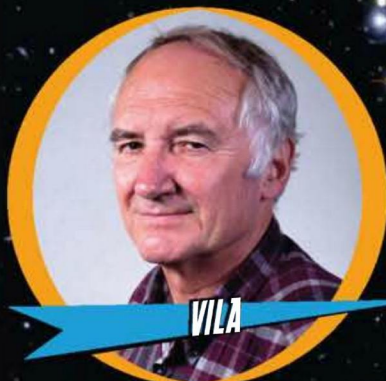
Blake's 7 was definitely ahead of its time. Terry Nation was certainly a successful writer but he was also underestimated as a creator of, shall we say, groundbreaking characters. Avon was the first antihero who was also a hero, as it were. You knew he was a bad guy but he was on the side of the good guys – or so it seemed. Was he a freedom fighter or a terrorist? I always regarded them as terrorists. Avon was a terrorist who was out to get what he wanted for himself – and he just happened to go along for the ride. He got what he wanted in the end – he got the Liberator and then it blew up, which was useful! But Terry definitely had his finger on the pulse of the times, and he was also able to look ahead to how things would develop. This is similar to other gifted artists like Steven Spielberg and George Lucas. They conceived their work way before it was made public, obviously, so they gauged society's collective mood several years ahead of it manifesting itself.



he was a freedom fighter. I'd say that there are one or two moral questions that might be asked today that weren't asked 30 years ago and, interestingly, in "Warship" Cally asks Blake, "Is that what you wanted? Were you worried or concerned about blowing up millions of people". It's a question that isn't answered, which is good. But I got out after the first two series and then came back for the very last episode. [Show creator] Terry Nation wasn't very happy about it but after the series had finished, we both went to a couple of conventions, where Terry and I got the chance to talk about it. We ended up getting on very well and he understood my reasons for leaving. Actually, what had happened to Blake while he was away would make a good story. He'd obviously roughened up and been wounded because he had a big scar down one eye. That was my stupid idea because it took two hours in make-up to get it down.



"Stand back, Blake's got this one."



VILA

MICHAEL KEATING

When we were first making the series I was always very aware of how it changed with people coming and going. After we did the first season, there was a gap of four months before we got started on the second. By the time we'd got to the third, I'd kind of got a handle on my character. I was still exploring him of course but I knew a bit more about where I was going with him and where the stories were going. Vila always played things safe and anything he didn't understand he got a bit worried about. Then we didn't do the fourth series until a year after we'd finished the third so there was a bit of a break in our lives. It was that thing of keeping the continuity going but the fourth season was a different spaceship anyway. We were always a bit ahead of our time but if you look at the '70s, there was what was happening with apartheid in South Africa, the IRA and the Loyalists and Nationalists in Northern Ireland. We've always had problems on this planet, since human beings have been here basically.



JENNA

SALLY KNYVETTE

I'm not sure exactly how morally ambiguous Blake actually was. He was always sold to us as the Robin Hood of space, helping the dispossessed and probably blowing up those who were supposedly very evil. I had the sense that he always had the strength to stand up for the underdog. But I look back now and think if I had the chance to do it again properly – a character that really developed – I would jump at it. I'm much older and wiser and more confident now. I was quite insecure, shy and nervous back then because I just hadn't done very much.

When I finally met Terry Nation in California, years after the series had finished, he said, "If only I'd known you at the time, I could have really written for you, but I was always better at writing for men". I think he was naturally biased towards the men, which was a reflection of the time. If you look at it now, women are in positions of power and they're doing very well educationally and in lots of different areas. I see no reason why that couldn't be reflected in an updated version of *Blake's 7*.

JAN CHAPPELL (GALLY)

I haven't actually watched any *Blake's 7* for absolutely yonks, although I did see some little bits recently because I was astonished to see how many episodes had been downloaded on YouTube. I'm actually missing some of the DVDs – I haven't got a full collection because I gave them away to people I thought might be interested. I think *Blake's 7* would be very different if we started making it now – the girls would be much more equal to the boys. In fact, we might even have had a female Blake figure. In a curious way, it somehow seems even more relevant now than it did back then. It could probably be used now in more advantageous ways at a political debate level. But the "Warship" script has been good, and for the most part they recall the character I was playing back then very well.





"I'm just going to prod it and see!"

JACQUELINE PEARCE (SERVALAN)

When we recorded the voiceovers for the audio CDs it was the first time that I'd seen *Blake's 7* since we first did it. I was surprised by how good it was and how well it's held up, even if the sets were a bit flimsy and all that. Were we ahead of our time? Sadly we always seem to be playing catch-up with sci-fi writers like Ray Bradbury, who even now seem very prescient. There's not much difference between then and now but Servalan was like a misunderstood heroine. She was a very damaged individual and that damage informs her personality. She had a huge ego - I used to be called the Iron Lady of space, although I wasn't deliberately influenced by Margaret Thatcher. I certainly had control over how she was dressed. Since she was the Supreme Commander, they wanted to put her in jackboots, a safari suit and a helmet but I said, "With this haircut, you might as well cast a man." I suggested going in the completely opposite direction and making her very feminine, so the difference between her actions and her appearance creates a sense of danger.

ZEN AND ORAC



CALLY

SERVALAN

ALASTAIR LOCK (ZEN AND ORAC)

I watched *Blake's 7* for the first time when I was a student. In 1978 I was 17 and here I am, over 30 years later, appearing alongside the original cast! It's been fun, but a bit weird, because I'm doing post-production along with the voices for Zen and Orac. I'm trying to do something in the spirit of Peter Tuddenham's original performance but it's also my own take on it. I see Zen as slightly more imperious and matter of fact than Orac, except when he doesn't have the information to hand. I've kept Peter's description of the character in mind.

He said Zen was like a very fussy civil servant, so everything is just a bit too much bother for him. Orac had gradually become more caricatured than Derek Farr's original performance (in the first episode), which was basically him being himself in a box. Peter ramped it up so he's slightly more officious. I actually feel very similar to how Peter must have done back then because while the other actors were all in the studio, he was behind the scenes in a box. We're all in a box today but I'm in my own little box, delivering the lines.





Maths

Sci-fi and fantasy TV in numbers

Sums • Rob Power

49

The chart position that the soundtrack from *Buffy The Vampire Slayer* episode "Once More With Feeling" reached on the Billboard 200

3,428.57

Price paid (in \$US) per centimetre of the model of the Enterprise D that was used in the title sequence of *Star Trek: The Next Generation* at a Christie's auction in 2006 (it sold for \$576,000)

22¹/₄

Continuous days it would take to watch all 704 episodes of *Star Trek: The Original Series*, *The Next Generation*, *Voyager*, *Deep Space Nine* and *Enterprise* in order (that's 534.67 hours)

900,000

Cost (in \$US) of a 30-second advert placement to air during the *Lost* finale.

1,200

Seconds it took David Lynch and composer Angelo Badalamenti to write the theme tune to *Twin Peaks*. High-speed music making in action

6 236

Seasons *Game Of Thrones* has left before it runs out of books to adapt, on the basis of two seasons per book from season three onwards. George RR Martin better get writing...

Years until the Babylon Project gets under way (Babylon 5 won't be operational until 2257)

π

An integral figure in Ken Keeler's "Futurama Theorem", the mathematical formula that Keeler wrote for the *Futurama* episode "The Prisoner Of Benda"

144

Number of Halloweens since *True Blood*'s Bill Compton became a vampire. He's probably saved a fortune on costumes...

33

Number of Space Corps Directives which have been quoted to date in *Red Dwarf*

15.2 million

The total number of viewers of *The Walking Dead* season three premiere in the US (combined from the 9pm viewing, the repeat an hour later and the midnight viewing). That's a whole lot of zombie lovin'



10,553,600

Amount of cash (in £) you'll need if you want to buy 1120 Westchester Place, LA – the main location for season one of *American Horror Story*, currently on the market for \$17m

34 13 minutes 51 seconds

The number of “distinct ideas” that 20th Century Fox claimed *Battlestar Galactica* stole from *Star Wars* when it sued Universal Studios in 1978

Time it would take to fly from London to New York in Thunderbird 1 (3,465 miles at 15,000mph)

17,227

Speed (in mph) at which the copies of *Firefly* that were left on the International Space Station by Browncoat astronaut Steven Swanson orbit the Earth

2.5 million

Actual number of years it would take a radio signal to reach ALF's home planet Melmac, which is 2.5 million light years away from Earth

146 11.37

Number of years ALF says it will take a radio signal to reach his home planet of Melmac in the Andromeda Galaxy

Percentage of the UK population that watched the premiere of *Merlin*'s fifth series (7.12 million in a population of 62,641,000)

39 years, 6 months, 10 days
The age of Number Six – and Patrick McGoochan, who shared his character's birthday – on the date the first episode of *The Prisoner* was transmitted (born 19 March 1928, transmission date 29 September 1967)

4,999,998,041

Number of years the Face Of Boe has left to live (he dies in the year 5 billion and 53 in *Doctor Who* episode “Gridlock”, the poor old wrinkly fella)



Now What?

The Empire Strikes Back aside, TV does cliffhangers much better than movies. We rate 10 TV moments with maximum shock value

In suspense • Jordan Farley

1 CYLON RUNNING

FROM: *Battlestar Galactica*, "Lay Down Your Burdens, Part Two" (2.20)

THE CLIFFHANGER: Humanity is living in New Caprica City, Baltar is president and Apollo is fat. Pretty shoddy time for the Cylons to invade...

WHY IT WORKED: A game-changing season finale that established a new paradigm outside of the show's comfort zone and left humanity to a fate they'd spent two seasons running from.

WAS IT WORTH IT?: Yep. It led into *BSG*'s most subversive storyline, a terrorism metaphor with humans as insurgents, and *Galactica*'s single greatest moment – Adama's audacious freefall manoeuvre.

SHOCK VALUE:



2 HAS DEAN

FROM: *Supernatural*, "No Rest For The Wicked" (3.16)

THE CLIFFHANGER: Dean is mauled to death by hellhounds and his soul trapped in Hell.

WHY IT WORKED: No one expected the writers to do it. The seeds were sewn during the season two finale, but even after an entire year the brothers still fail.

WAS IT WORTH IT?: Absolutely. Dean is pulled out of the pit by the Angel Castiel, introducing one of *Supernatural*'s most popular characters and a race that would elevate the show from good to great.

SHOCK VALUE:



3 FORWARD THINKING

FROM: *Lost*, "Through The Looking Glass, Part Two" (3.23)

THE CLIFFHANGER: "We have to go back, Kate. We have to go back!"

WHY IT WORKED: Flashbacks were an ingrained part of *Lost*'s narrative structure. Here it's revealed the flashbacks we've been watching throughout the episode are really flashforwards. Absolutely inspired.

WAS IT WORTH IT?: No. The flashforwards left unanswered questions and didn't amount to much once the Oceanic Six returned.

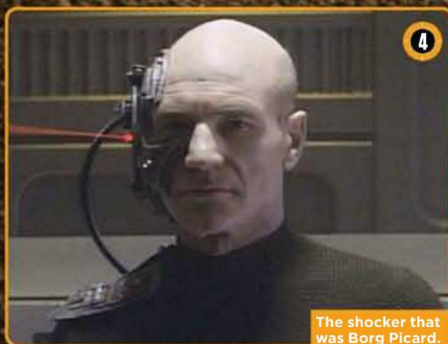
SHOCK VALUE:



4 BORG FREE

FROM: *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, "The Best of Both Worlds, Part I" (3.26)

THE CLIFFHANGER: Picard is assimilated by the Borg.



The shocker that was Borg Picard.

WHY IT WORKED: Picard was Starfleet's last hope against the unstoppable Borg. Of all the people who could have been assimilated...

WAS IT WORTH IT?: For shock value alone: definitely. But also because Locutus (Borg Picard) is used in the season four premiere to defeat the Borg. Better still Picard would suffer from his ordeal for years – up to and including ace movie *First Contact*.

SHOCK VALUE:



5 DOUBLE TROUBLE

FROM: *Fringe*, "There's More Than One Of Everything" (1.20)

THE CLIFFHANGER: Olivia discovers there's a parallel universe, where the World Trade Center is still standing!

WHY IT WORKED: Shocking final image aside, this cliffhanger confirmed there was so much more to *Fringe* than freaks of the week, and finally introduced us to William Bell.

WAS IT WORTH IT?: Unquestionably. The parallel universe became integral in later seasons and ranks as one of the best arc plots in sci-fi TV history.

SHOCK VALUE:



6 SLAYER SLAYED

FROM: *Buffy The Vampire Slayer*, "The Gift" (5.22)

THE CLIFFHANGER: Buffy dies.

WAS IT WORTH IT?: No one knew if Buffy would be renewed when "The Gift" first aired, which made Buffy's, possibly final, sacrifice all the more heartbreaking.

WAS IT WORTH IT?: Buffy didn't stay dead but her dismay about being pulled out of heaven provided drama for season six. And her deliciously wry tombstone epitaph – "She saved the world. A lot" – has become iconic.

SHOCK VALUE:



7 WHERE ANGEL DARES

FROM: *Angel*, "Not Fade Away" (5.22)

THE CLIFFHANGER: Angel and co face a hopeless battle against an army of creatures.

WHY IT WORKED: Joss Whedon considers Angel's final moments a statement that the fight never ends rather than a cliffhanger, but however you feel, it's one of the most satisfying unresolved endings ever.

WAS IT WORTH IT?: Yes. Angel's ending said so much by showing so little.

SHOCK VALUE:



8 HE KNOWS KUNG-FU

FROM: *Chuck*, "Chuck Versus The Ring" (2.22)

THE CLIFFHANGER: Chuck learns kung-fu.

WHY IT WORKED: Chuck spent two seasons as a loveable loser. The season two cliffhanger turns him into the geekiest ninja on the planet.

WAS IT WORTH IT?: Absolutely, it was game-changing in the best possible way. For the rest of the series Chuck was trained as a master spy, giving the show a whole new dynamic.

SHOCK VALUE:



9 BOB STORY

FROM: *Twin Peaks*, "Beyond Life And Death" (2.22)

THE CLIFFHANGER: Agent Cooper is possessed by BOB.

WHY IT WORKED: Cooper's cruel fate is an even harder pill to swallow after his seeming success. Well, you didn't expect a happy ending, did you?

WAS IT WORTH IT?: No third season meant no resolution, making this an incredibly frustrating cliffhanger.

SHOCK VALUE:



10 HONG KONG SCREW

FROM: *Alias*, "The Telling" (2.22)

THE CLIFFHANGER: Sydney wakes up in Hong Kong with no memory of where she's been for two years.

WHY IT WORKED: It was totally unpredictable and the mystery irresistible.

WAS IT WORTH IT?: Just about. The jump forward two years allowed the show's ageing format to be refreshed, but the MacGuffin organisation responsible was ultimately just another misdirect.

SHOCK VALUE:



1



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One Seaso

Casualties of falling ratings, mismanagement by TV networks, or plain old indifference... *SFX* casts its eye over some of the most lamented cancellations in sci-fi history – and a couple of the more welcome ones

Firefly

14 episodes, 2002-3

Isn't *Firefly* the most famous One Season Wonder of all time?

We certainly think so! We can't think of many other cancelled freshman TV shows that went on to become a multimillion-dollar movie with the same cast and crew.

What was so good about it?

Back in the '60s, Gene Roddenberry wanted *Star Trek* to be like a Western in space. With *Firefly*, what we get is a Western in space, complete with cowboys, cattle-rustling, gunslingers and dusty frontier towns. And it's unbelievably entertaining to boot.

If it was so good, then why the hell was it cancelled?

Ratings – why else? It also didn't

help that Fox stuffed up the running order, so the first episode that aired didn't serve as much of an introduction. People who might have been willing to take a leap and watch a sci-fi Western were so confused they wandered off.

It's still pretty popular though, isn't it?

Firefly spawned humongous DVD sales, a movie, a comic book series, a recent 10-year anniversary panel at Comic-Con – not to mention huge career boosts for its stars and creator.

Is it missed?

There are several thousand people on this planet who'd sell their soul to the Devil to get this show back.

Words • Jayne Nelson



Cowboys. On a spaceship.

"Fox stuffed up the running order, so the first episode that aired didn't serve as much of an intro"

American Gothic

22 episodes, 1995-6

This is the one with the haunted house and Jessica Lange, isn't it?

No, that's *American Horror Story*. *American Gothic* is the show that placed the first, tentative foot on the path of bringing real horror to American television.

Sounds cool! What was it about?

A small town named Trinity and its Sheriff, Lucas Buck (Gary Cole), who is the Devil.

Really? Its lead is the Devil?

Well, he's not named as such, but the implication is there! Basically he's a right bastard, but one you love to hate. He spent the series

tormenting a little boy named Caleb (Lucas Black) and generally being a git.

Sounds a bit disturbing to us.

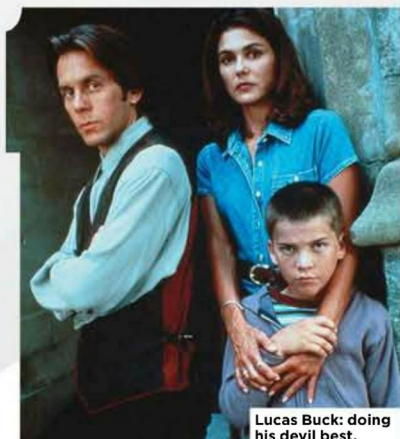
All sorts of horrible things happen to people, such as being buried alive. With Sam Raimi as an executive producer, it also has a sick and twisted current of black humour – delicious!

Why was it cancelled?

CBS played silly buggers with its airdates and seemed so baffled by this monster they'd created that eventually they kicked it outside and locked the door. Sadly, the monster never found another home.

Is it missed?

It may be gone, but *American Gothic* is definitely not forgotten.



Lucas Buck: doing his devil best.

n Wonders

Ultraviolet

6 episodes, 1998

Isn't this a Milla Jovovich movie?

Er, no. It's a Channel Four vampire series that was so ahead of its time you could make it 10 years from now and it'd still look futuristic.

Okay... but what was it?

Jack Davenport plays a police detective who discovers his best friend is a vampire and that there's a secret vampire-hunting squad to keep them under control. It's all very moody and serious with some bloody spectacular vampire action.

Not like *Buffy*, then?

It's more of a vampire show for adults, back in a time when vampires were still seen as silly.

Was it good?

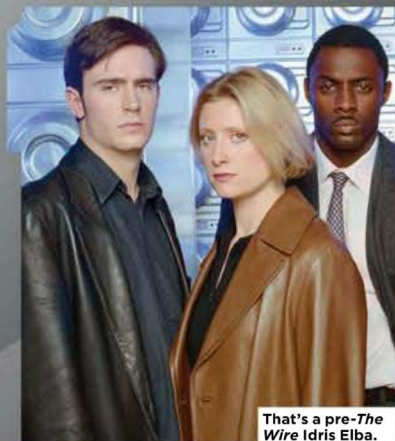
Cracking! So good, in fact, that when it was cancelled it was like a punch to the gut.

Ah, the same old sob story, probably – bad ratings...

Actually no. It didn't come back because series creator Joe Ahearne didn't want it to.

Say what?

He'd burned out working on series one and had nowhere to go in series two, among other reasons. So this is a One Season Wonder that we can't use to whinge about a network!



That's a pre-*The Wire* Idris Elba.

Sounds like *Ultraviolet*'s still missed, then?

A thousand times yes!

"All the characters make stupid decisions. Over and over again"



Earth 2: not as good as *Earth 1*.

Earth 2

21 episodes, 1994-5

Catchy title... so what was *Earth 2* all about?

Think *Outcasts* – new settlers arrive on a distant planet – but the Marx Brothers version.

Rings a bell now. Wasn't this show utter, utter pants?

Oh yes.

Why?

Have you got all day? Mainly it was down to the fact that it overuses the kids in the cast and all the characters make stupid decisions. Over and over again.

Surely there must have been something good about it?

It was so bad even *The X-Files* had a dig, with one of the Lone Gunmen asking Mulder if he wanted to "hop onto the internet and pick apart the scientific inaccuracies of *Earth 2*." Now there's a claim to fame!

The reason for its cancellation...?

Who cares? It was too rubbish to live.

Silly question: is it missed?

In the same way you'd miss a infectious disease.

Outcasts

8 episodes, 2011

What's this one about, then?

It's set on the planet Carpathia, where settlers from Earth struggle to survive against tricky odds.

Aha, we see, they're "outcasts". Did it suck?

Yes and no. Yes in that the BBC didn't seem to know how to sell it ("It's more serious drama than sci-fi!") seemed to be their approach, which is very strange seeing as it contains spaceships and is set on an alien planet), and it's so deathly serious and mannered at times it can be quite tough to watch.

Sounds dreadful!

Sometimes, yes. But if you give it a chance it begins to unravel a rather good mystery, and the cast are great. It looks pretty, too: shot in beautiful South African landscapes.

Did it deserve to be cancelled?

No. The fact the BBC canned it showed a knee-jerk fear of sci-fi that you'd think they'd be done with by now, what with *Doctor Who* and all!

Is it missed?

It didn't have time to generate much love, sadly.



The search for a fan continues.



Great title: not a great show.

Manimal

8 episodes, 1983

This one's about the guy who can change into animals, am I right?

Yes, and the fact you knew that shows how *Manimal* has imprinted itself into popular culture. However, have you actually watched it?

Well, no...

Nor has anybody else. Well, anybody under 25, anyway. It's more famous for its concept than anything else; the show itself is awful.

That's sad. It sounds great!

It would have looked far better if

it'd had a budget to go with the idea. Today on shows like *True Blood* they use CGI to turn people into animals; back in the '80s they used make-up. And it blew.

It's a great word, though, isn't it?

Manimal. Very functional.

Best thing about it by far.

So it was cancelled because it was crapola?

Yes, although there's still hope for Glen A Larson's much-adored concept: a film version is on the way!

Is it missed?

Only by '80s children who haven't seen it since then.

"It would have looked far better if it'd had a budget to go with the idea"

Odyssey 5

19 episodes, 2002-3

Sounds all mythological. Does it have Argonauts in it?

No, but it has astronauts! They're led by a man called Peter Weller, of all cool people, and they're on a space shuttle mission when the Earth is destroyed below them. Uh-oh.

Wow... that's an amazing idea!

Isn't it just? They then meet an alien who sends them back five years so they can fix whatever went wrong and save the planet.

And do they do it?

One Season Wonder, remember? It got cancelled and now we'll never find out!

Arrrggh, that's awful!

It's the horror of TV in a nutshell. Give your show a five-year arc, then watch as it gets binned before you've played out more than a year. It's a wonder anybody even tries to get a show made.

Why was it cancelled? It genuinely sounds gripping...

It was, although it got strangely silly at times. Sadly it wasn't popular and Showtime had to let it go (sniff).

Is it missed?

Yes, although most of the pain comes from not knowing what blew the bloody Earth up.



What RoboCop did next...

"The horror of TV in a nutshell... It's a wonder anybody even tries to get a show made"



Another dose of vampire lovin'.

Moonlight

2007-8, 16 episodes

Sounds suspiciously like *Twilight* to us. Did this have vampires in it?

Oh yes, *Moonlight* was happy to jump on the then-new *Twilight* bandwagon and play up the love story between a human woman and a male vampire.

Not star-crossed teenagers again...

Nope, adults! It stars Alex O'Loughlin, now the leading man on *Hawaii Five-O*, alongside Sophia Myles. They both try very hard in a show that isn't that good, although it is sweet and entertaining at times.

What was the story?

Taking its cue from *Angel*, O'Loughlin plays Mick St John, a vampire private investigator. Myles is a reporter. He saves her life, they fall in love, other vampires intervene, yadda yadda. Nothing new, but there's lots to like here nonetheless.

Why'd it get canned?

Ratings, but it's sad because the series was just finding its feet. And its fanbase was really, really, *really* pissed off about it.

Is it missed?

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Words •
Tara Bennett

With *Fringe* deep into its final year, showrunner Joel (JH) Wyman looks back at each of its five seasons to explain how the best sci-fi show on TV right now evolved

SEASON ONE

Wyman was asked to join *Fringe* around episode 1.14 ("Ability")

"JJ Abrams had asked if I'd come in and help because they hadn't found the show yet. It was sort of stuck between this really awesome pilot, and, 'Where do we go from here?'. It had procedural elements so was it an *X-Files* clone? What was it about? Basically, I said to them, 'I love science fiction but I haven't written a lot of it'. I adore it, of course, but JJ said it was really about a family and not to worry because I'd love it. Ultimately, I realised the better the science fiction, the more about humanity it was. Once I realised that, I was like, 'Okay, I can do a million of these. I love this!'

"I think we started to find the show at the end of the first season. Everybody started to think in different directions, but ultimately it came down to executive producer Bryan Burk – a little known fact! We were sitting around and I was coming up with the concept that there's more than one of everything and the idea of a coin. There would be two

coins: one for Over Here and one for Over There. Bryan blurted out in the writer's room, 'We have to show the hatch!' It was brilliant because it was true. We were covering the ball so much and nobody was compelled. The audience didn't know what was going on, or where the show was going. So once we let the cat out of the bag – that Peter is from another place and Walter is hiding a terrible secret – the show began to take purchase. It was a defining moment."



Just another day at the office.



An early *X-Files*-type case.



“What I’m always trying to say is that life is guided by the connections that you make. That connection is king”

SEASON TWO

With the idea of the parallel universe established, the second year brought Peter’s unconventional backstory to the fore

“We were still firing in the dark to try to figure out the best way to tell the stories. We would hit and miss, hit and miss; some would be better than others. We learned a lot of lessons. Ultimately the ‘mythalone’ didn’t come into play until ‘White Tulip’ and that, to me, was a massive moment of enlightenment – it seems like such an easy answer when you’re looking back at it. ‘Duh, Joel! How about you tell a great story people are compelled by, but then you also give the hardcore fans something to stick with?’

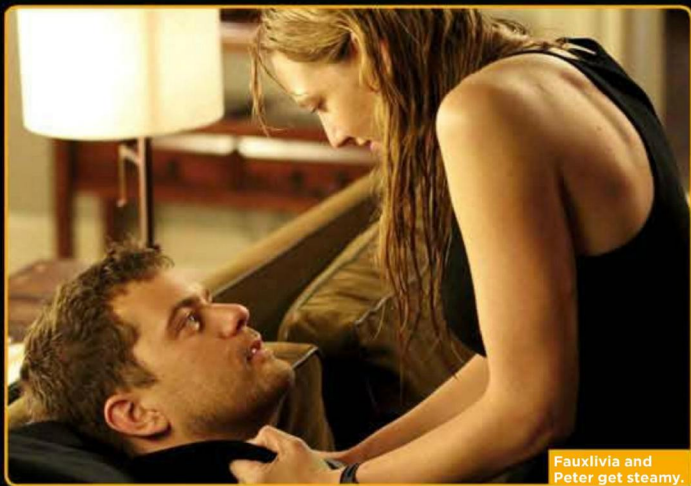
You get a lot of pressure from the networks to do standalones because they want more people to come to the table. Therein lies the conundrum, because I never want to leave the show’s fans frustrated but we have a master we have to please as well. It was really tricky. However, in season two, what was really cool was that we were trying out a whole bunch of different paradigms. One week might be a horror episode, the next week would have an alien feel... it gave us a lot of gasoline for a while but, bit by bit, the really important stuff starts to become clear: Peter, Peter’s



Nothing puts Walter off his food.

relationship with Walter, Walter’s relationship with the team, Walter’s secret, Peter’s understanding of the secret and his position in the world, then Olivia and her powers. All these things started to gain the importance that they probably should have had a lot earlier.

“By the middle of the second season it became clear that I’m writing *Fringe* for a very specific reason. What I’m always trying to say is that life is guided by the connections that you make and that’s my own personal message, that connection is king.”



Fauxlivia and Peter get steamy.

SEASON THREE

Ready to embrace a risky universe hopping storyline, Wyman says pitching season three to the paymasters at Fox was tough

"When [co-showrunner] Jeff Pinkner and I realised where we wanted to go, I felt 100% confident that there was no way, honestly and sincerely, that I could feel good about telling a story with an alternate universe without giving the audience a perspective of what was really going on there – if we didn't, I felt the audience would get short shrift and it would be a bit lame.

"I was very, very invested in creating characters on the other side because, thematically for me, the life and choices we make are so important as to how we tell the story. I was really interested in saying that you can change your life – you're like four choices away from a completely different existence. It's a positive message. Fortunately, we had a lot of positive fan response after going over to see William Bell. We could point to that and say, 'We think people are really interested'. Everybody was a little nervous but once they decided to go with it, they never looked back. So that's how we ended up going Over There. Of course, everybody started to fall in love with the alt characters and then the irony was when we shut the door everybody went, 'WHAT?!'"



Nina was an unlikely surrogate mum.

SEASON FOUR

Season four began with one of the lead characters, Peter Bishop, erased from history by "The Machine"

"Once we started on season four, we didn't jump off the track at all. The disappearance of Peter is going to be very important when it comes to the end of the show, and you're going to understand what September's trepidations were – why Peter's so important and all these other great things. You'll go back and say, 'Oh, I get it'.

"We were always talking about a coming war. What was appealing to us wasn't a 'war', because how boring is that? It needed to be a much more diversified idea of what war is, what it means and what we're fighting for. At the end of season four, and especially when 'Letters Of Transit' was conceived, it was very clear we are fighting for our humanity, which is really interesting. We really loved the idea that the Observers seemed like really interesting, good people. But you had 12 scientists who came down to take various samples and ideas from our humanity. September fell in love with his charges and the people that we are in this stage of evolution. It was very clear then that the 12 were going to go back and report their findings but they didn't understand what they were doing. Once the plan



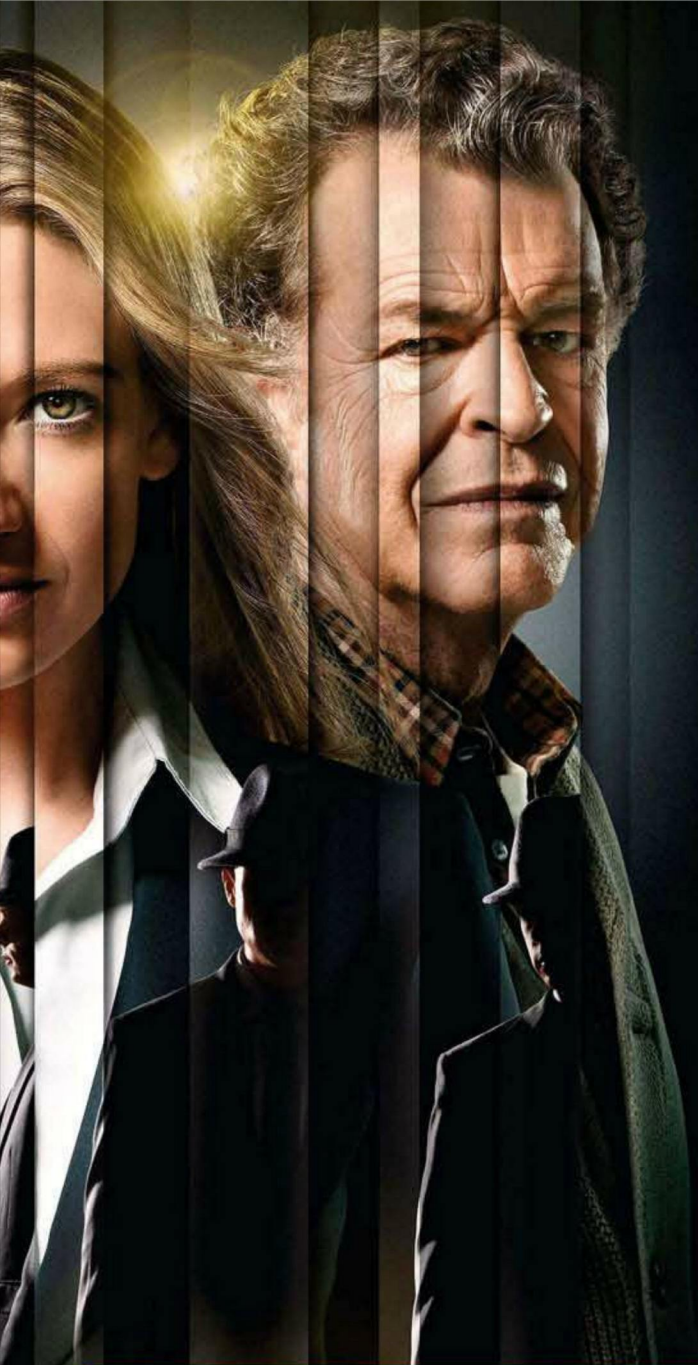
"I'm a huge fan of TV myself and I'd want a number of things from a series I'd invested five years of my life in"

became clear, it was too late. It's funny because a lot of fans now say, 'I thought the Observers were good guys!' Well, some of them! Not all Germans were Nazis."

SEASON FIVE

Wyman says season five got picked up on the strength of season four flashforward episode "Letters Of Transit" and a pitch presentation he put together with everyone from the show to persuade the network to let them end their story

"It was a risk and a gamble but... once we got it, the real thinking began. I had to decide what's important to answer and what's not. It came down to the following: I'm a huge fan of television myself and I'd want a number of things from a series I'd invested five years of my life in. I'd want my characters to evolve and go on odysseys. I'd want logical conclusions that make sense and move me. Most importantly, I'd want it to finish in a way so that when it's over, the next day, if I was a viewer and I took a shower, had breakfast and drove to work, I'd feel good because I'd know where my characters are. I don't need to know exactly what they're doing but I'd sense that everything happened the way it needed to happen and I could imagine them in their lives. I'd feel okay about the separation – it was beautiful what I experienced, and wow, that was something. So that was a



Torv De Force

Anna Torv on playing Olivia Dunham

When the show started out as an *X-Files*-type series, did you have any idea what it would become?

I think I went through a few stages. I didn't think it was going to be as procedural as it sort of became through the first and second seasons, but I didn't think we'd be doing it for five years either. I think that's just the way that television is, it's a fluid media – it constantly kind of moves.

You've been playing Olivia for more than four years now. Do you feel a connection with her?

It's funny because I think what happens is you meld a little bit, so you sort of stop seeing her as clearly as I think I did in the beginning. It's like doing an accent, or being in a different country – when you first get there, all you can hear is the different accents and that you're different, and then before you know it the next little phase is that you *can't* hear the accent anymore. It ends up melding.

When you first read *Fringe* scripts, do you ever have moments when you think, "How the hell am I going to make this plausible on screen?"

Oh yeah, all the time. Olivia's role right from the very start has been that she buys everything. I think that's her function in the show – Walter says this and then Olivia says, 'Really, how?' She's the realist and she buys it all the time, so yeah, saying that with a straight face is difficult but you do it!

Would you like Olivia to have a happy ending?

Of course, there'll be a happy ending for the show because this is TV and that's the way you set this up – you're not going to see these people any more, so you want to imagine them off doing their own happy thing. But for me, I think it would be pretty awesome if we sacrificed people. And as much as I think Olivia wants very much to be in a happy, committed, loving relationship with a family and all that, I do sometimes wonder if that's her, if that's something that she's actually capable of!

Richard Edwards



Olivia and Peter's daughter, Etta.

moment of clarity for me. Once I'd decided what I'd expect it was very easy – I was going to tell three odysseys: Olivia's, Peter's and Walter's. And to go through in these last 13 episodes and really nail the theme – what I've always been writing about – which is that it's so difficult to keep a family together in this day and age. It's so difficult, at times, to look at this terrible world and find beauty. It's so difficult to keep hope. I wanted to make sure that was the message: connection is hard but it's worth it. The show for me has always been a metaphor for the struggles of life."

Fringe's final season is now showing on Sky1 in the UK and Fox in the US.



Quivers*

How hot new DC Comics adaptation
Arrow hits the bullseye

Words • Joseph McCabe



Island life is no holiday for Queen.



Getting to grips with his bow.

*Because a quiver is where an archer keeps their arrows, see

It's the hit no one expected. After 10 years of waiting for Clark Kent to transform into Superman on *Smallville*, comic book lovers had little reason to believe another DC superhero TV show would take a different approach, especially one about the Green Arrow, a beloved character but one nowhere near as recognisable as the Man of Steel. Then out of nowhere, and true to its name, there came *Arrow*. The saga of billionaire playboy Oliver Queen – who after surviving a shipwreck, spends five years on a remote island, and returns to his home city to avenge his father's death and obliterate crime and corruption – is that of a modern-day Robin Hood. And the show's producers admit that, unlike *Smallville* (which featured its own iteration of the character) they took their cue from Christopher Nolan's Batman movies.

"We're very heavily influenced by the Christopher Nolan *Dark Knight* trilogy," executive producer Marc Guggenheim tells *SFX*. "He took different pieces from throughout the lore and put them through his own prism, and that's where his look came from. We've been doing very much the same thing with our characters and villains."

"I actually watched *The Dark Knight Rises* for the third time the other night," says Guggenheim's fellow exec Andrew Kreisberg, in the midst of working on the show's 11th episode, "and I sort of realised the trilogy is very helpful in terms of tone but not in terms of storytelling. Because in the *Dark Knight* movies they're only telling two-and-a-half hour stories, we're telling 22 hours' worth of story this year."

EPIC CHALLENGE

Kreisberg explains how the team approached telling a much longer story, one which, in its first year, sees its protagonist evolve from vigilante to champion.

"Oliver Queen has had a rich, historic career through the years. You cherry-pick the best bits from different places. We took a little bit of *The Longbow Hunters*, Mike Grell's seminal run. We were very influenced by

"Hi, I'm a superhero, you know."



It's tough being a minted playboy.



There's a lot of catching up to do.



Anyone getting a Robin Hood vibe?



"We put a lens on the comic book that was as close to real life and as close to the world outside your window as possible"

Year One, by Andy Diggle. That was the first time anyone had suggested he wasn't alone on the island, and not just a castaway – someone who had adventures that made him become a hero when he came back to the city. The idea of having an origin story that could take place over the course of the entire series was really the starting point.

"We put a lens on the comic book that was as close to real life and as close to the world outside your window as possible. Then, if you imagine glasses with a pull-down sunglass lens, we added in an additional lens of what would work for a television show. Probably the best example is we populate his world with other characters that weren't from the comics – for example, Oliver's best friend Tommy Merlyn, his mother (who in the comics is dead along with his father), and his sister, who never existed in the comics. That lens was all about giving Oliver people to interact with. If you're doing a movie, a supporting cast is not as important. But with a TV show, with 22 episodes a year, you need an ensemble, a cast of characters who can interact with your protagonist and with each other."

HIDDEN SECRETS

Also key to *Arrow*'s success is the show's central mystery – Oliver Queen himself. "One of the things that we hit upon very early on, and this is very different from the comic, is the idea that Oliver himself is a mystery. He comes back after five years on the island. He has all these skills and you wonder how he got them. He has all these scars and tattoos, and you wonder how he got those. There's a procedural element to the show. All

By night, he's crafting arrows...



...and honing his archery skills.



Going With The Bow

Katie Cassidy on playing the emerald archer's better half, Dinah "Laurel" Lance

WHAT'S SEXIER – A BOW AND ARROW OR A GUN?

A gun is not as much work. With an arrow there's a lot more technique involved. [Laughs]

IN THE COMICS, DINAH IS THE BLACK CANARY. IS THE POTENTIAL FOR THAT SOMETHING THAT ATTRACTED YOU TO THE SHOW?

Yes. It would be really cool. I've always wanted to do an action show or movie, or fight training. I think girls kicking ass is always fun. So that would be really cool. I'd be over the moon excited about that.

DINAH IS ALSO A STRONG ROLE MODEL IN THE COMICS. SHE'S VERY MUCH HER OWN PERSON. DO YOU FEEL THAT'S REFLECTED IN THE SHOW'S CHARACTER?

Yes, Laurel has had to cope with a lot in her life. She deals with Oliver's disappearance by focusing on her work, and as she's a *pro bono* lawyer she obviously wants to help the underprivileged. I almost feel like in her relationship with her father, she's had to be there for him a lot, growing up. Her mother was gone at an early age, so Laurel had to take on the role of her mother. So obviously she had a lot to carry on her shoulders. And she's still doing it. She wants to help everyone in any way that she can... She sees the tension in Oliver, and she loves him. She can't help herself. Although he's continuously disappointed her, and it hurts her, she just keeps going back for more. It's almost like a drug. You keep going back, although you know you're going to get hurt.



The leather-clad China White.

procedurals have a mystery. But unlike a CSI where the mystery is being investigated by the protagonist, here the protagonist *is* the mystery."

In actor Stephen Amell, Guggenheim says *Arrow* has someone capable of being that mystery. "We knew we were going to need a movie star to play Oliver. Not just in terms of looks, but we needed someone who could carry this entire show because he's playing so many different characters. He's the young Oliver who's crashed on this island, and the Oliver who comes back, who is pretending to still be a playboy. Then there's the character of Arrow himself. We needed somebody who looked the part and was also incredibly talented. Stephen was the first person we saw. With every person who came in after, it was 'That guy wasn't Stephen'. He was our guy."

LADY JUSTICE

In selecting Amell's co-star – who plays Oliver's lady love, the crusading lawyer Dinah "Laurel" Lance – Guggenheim found an actress as passionate as her character.

"Katie Cassidy was someone we've all known for a long time. What's amazing about her is she's at a point in her career where she doesn't need to come in and read, you just offer her the part. But she was willing to come in. That's how badly she wanted this part. The two of them will hopefully turn into one of those great TV couples that people are rooting for to make it in the long run."

As for whether or not Cassidy will someday don the iconic fishnet stockings of the character's comic book alter ego, the Black Canary, Guggenheim says, "We'll have to see. We've definitely been laying groundwork along those lines, but we've tried to twist and turn the story against people's expectations. So far that's worked well for us. So we'll see."

In the meantime, Kreisberg says fans can enjoy plenty of other DC characters making their live-action debut on *Arrow*.

"We tell the stories that need to be told at the time and work best for the show and the life of the series going forward. Then we retrofit characters from the comics if they fit. For example, we wanted to do an episode about the first time Oliver's moved off of his father's list of one-percenters and went after criminals who are hurting the city in a more blue-collar way. So



The hooded hunter takes aim.

"We tell the stories that need to be told and work best for the show... then we retrofit characters from the comics if they fit"

it was all about these bank robbers, and we hit upon the idea that we might as well call them the Royal Flush Gang, because that's a group of characters from the comic. Even though our approach is much more grounded and different from the comic book iteration. We wanted to do an episode where Oliver goes up against somebody who uses fire as a weapon, and we remembered there's a Batman villain called Firefly. But it's really the last step in our process, to figure out if there's a comic book character.

"Now that we're in the back half of the season, we're also very cognisant of not always going with the comics. So we're adding more toys to the toy box in the hope that our show is more fleshed out, but also in the hope that we not just borrow from the comic books but add to the comics. We've already seen Tommy Merlyn show up in an issue of *Green Arrow*."

ON THE HUNT

In addition to Deathstroke, Deadshot, China White, and the Huntress, who features in a two-part story across episodes seven and eight, Guggenheim says fans can expect the return of Adam Hunt in episode nine.

"He was the very first bad guy that Oliver took down, in the pilot. I think bringing him in for the mid-season finale, 'Year's End', gives episode nine this nice sense of full circle. We're returning to the guy who was part of

starting this whole thing. We also introduce a new antagonist for Oliver that I think is pretty cool. We advance the mythology. There's a lot going on in episode nine. But at the same time it's also our Christmas episode."

"We've decided that our Oliver Queen lives in a very grounded world," explains Kreisberg. "He doesn't live in the world of *Smallville*, where there are aliens and superpowers and mutants. So anyone who has superpowers doesn't really fit into our worldview. Right off the bat that eliminates characters like Superman and Wonder Woman and the Martian Manhunter and Flash and Green Lantern, because they're just not part of our world. In the same way that Christopher Nolan took Ra's al Ghul – who was immortal in the comics – and made his immortality a ruse in the *Dark Knight* trilogy, that's what we've been doing with our characters."

"For the most part," adds Kreisberg, who's also a former *Green Arrow* comic book writer, "DC Comics has been very open to us reaching into its playlist and letting us pull certain people out. As comic fans, for us what's exciting is taking lesser known characters that have never seen the light of day outside of comics and introducing them to a wider audience."

Arrow airs on Sky1 in the UK (Mondays) and on the CW in the US (Wednesdays).



Evil-eyed assassin
Deadshot...



...showed up in
episode three.



Let the vigilante
deathmatch begin!

Reassessed

WARNING!
CONTROVERSIAL
OPINIONS AHEAD

These comments represent the views of individual writers. They are possibly (indeed probably) wrong – that's kind of the point.

Shows that aren't as bad as the world would have you believe

DARK ANGEL (2000-02)

James Cameron can't make movies without striking gold. Commercially this may not have been true of his short-lived TV series, *Dark Angel*, but I'll challenge anyone who doubts that, on a critical level, his winning streak was left intact.

Debuting in 2000, *Dark Angel* was the first of a wave of shows to put a kick-ass heroine front and centre. Set in a post-apocalyptic near future where an EMP has turned most electronic devices into scrap metal, it was about a group of test-tube child soldiers given superpowers by a shady corporation.

The setting, series arc and scale of the action was bigger than almost anything on TV at the time. *Dark Angel* had ambitions to offer a big screen experience on the goggle box, and it *almost* succeeded, hobbled only by a dwindling budget. Jessica Alba was at the tipping point of mega-stardom and makes a compelling protagonist, in and out of the show's endless revealing costumes, while the remaining cast of oddball characters provided entertaining support.

Production design was superb and, in general, the scripting was of the highest quality. It won't be remembered as the greatest sci-fi show ever made, but anyone who says it wasn't one of the best shows of the early noughties needs their barcode reading.

Jordan Farley



Jessica Alba, the Fantastic One.

© Kobal Collection



The renegade crew of Serenity.



They're some big damn heroes.



In space no one can hear you moo.



Don't we know you from *Homeland*?

FIREFLY (2002)

On the back cover of the October 1950 issue of *Galaxy Science Fiction* – the short story monthly that would go on to publish writers like Robert Heinlein, Harlan Ellison and Ray Bradbury – founding editor HL Gold pointed out the similarity between the Western and the space opera: spacecraft and horse, remote planet and frontier town, “proton gun-blaster” and six-shooter.

And with that the space western, with all of its hoary clichés, was all but *obliterated*. Progress was made. The genre matured. But *Firefly*, for all its sly wit, slick special effects, and admittedly good intentions, joined the countless films and shows in the decades that followed in dragging sci-fi back to the nursery.

When *Firefly* debuted in 2002, creator Joss Whedon, through *Buffy The Vampire Slayer* and *Angel*, had proven himself a master of fantasy and horror. As for his approach to science fiction, well, *Firefly* is a sci-fi story with no reason to be a sci-fi story. It needn't reference Westerns when it could just as well be a Western.

Unlike *Star Trek* – a space opera which, at its best, uses science fiction to explore the human condition – *Firefly* uses its adopted genre as little more than a fashion statement. It's the teenage boy who wears his grandfather's army jacket to impress girls.

Joseph McCabe

So-called classics that really aren't all that

“You can’t please all the people all the time,” so the saying goes, and that’s certainly true of TV sci-fi. We give five much-derided shows some love, and pull five so-called classics off their pedestals

THE CAPE (2011)

The ruthlessness of network TV has led to the demise of many deserving shows. And though *The Cape* is probably one of the least lamented losses, it had the makings of something really special.

Its premise was simple: after being framed for murder and nearly killed, good guy cop Vince Faraday becomes a masked vigilante. At heart, it was your basic superhero narrative, but *The Cape* had so many inventive ideas up its sleeve that it didn’t feel tired. So instead of gaining superpowers or ninja fighting skills, its hero learned magic tricks to disorientate the bad guys. And instead of finding a sidekick, he got a whole support network in the form of the Carnival of Crime, a troupe of bank-robbing circus performers.

It was weird, over the top, and hopelessly earnest – particularly whenever the show decided Vince needed to visit his estranged family for a bit of pathos – but there was something endearing, and even exciting, about *The Cape*’s take on crime fighting. Unfortunately, low ratings led NBC to cut the show’s run from 13 episodes to just 10, so the last outings were a jumble of nonsensical rushed revelations, with several loose ends left dangling. As a result, it won’t be fondly remembered, but that doesn’t seem fair – it just wasn’t given time to flourish.

Sarah Dobbs



How did they come up with the title?



A Knight’s Tale auditions this way...



Tough training in the Big Top.



Summer Glau: she’s everywhere!



TNG: treating androids like people.



“It appears to be from *Thunderbirds*.”



Watch out, it’ll sting you!



The Enterprise gets touchy feely.

STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION (1987-94)

Star Trek: The Next Generation was the main reason I stopped buying *Starburst* in the late ’80s. My then-favourite magazine just wouldn’t stop quacking on about it, with article after article and cover after cover – even blurred ones! I liked the original series but somehow I detested this before I even saw it (which was a while for us Brits – remember that three-year US and UK transmission gap, oldies?).

When I did see it my worst fears were confirmed. Jean-Luc Picard, champagne socialist extraordinaire, snootily commanding his minions with his deeply irritating catchphrase “Make it so”; rubbishy American picture quality; claustrophobic studio-set adventures; even-more-sanctimonious-than-before Roddenberry-ness manifesting itself in smugly liberal politically correct over-earnest journeys to where *no one* had gone before. I mean, look at the crew: it was no longer enough for the crew to be racially diverse – now one of the characters had to be blind. Another was an irritating Yankee kid of exactly the sort I loathed. And one of them was a bloody Klingon!

But perhaps my main reason for not liking *TNG* was the same one that always had me preferring *Doctor Who* to *Star Trek* from a young age: it lacked, in both quantity and quality, monsters!

Russell Lewin

DEMONS (2009)

Since its brief six-episode run in 2009, *Demons* has become a *Crime Traveller* for the 21st century – the show that's become lazy shorthand for the worst British genre TV has to offer. It's a mantle the series doesn't deserve.

That's not to say it's anything close to a masterpiece – it's undeniably miscast, wears its *Buffy* influences too prominently on its wannabe cool sleeve, and its attempts to make things that go bump in the night sit comfortably on ITV's Saturday night primetime have the air of square pegs and round holes. Nonetheless, it's nowhere near as bad as Philip Glenister's American accent would have you believe.

For starters, its "last of the Van Helsing's" premise had plenty going for it, with the hidden world of "half-life" vampires, werewolves and spooks living under London ripe with potential. The monsters themselves are, in the main, pretty well realised and (in flashes at least) there's a sense of fun – until the series takes the inexplicable step of ending on a massive downer. The show's biggest problem is that the tone is totally muddled, but the same could be said of the first series of co-creators Johnny Capps and Julian Murphy's other show, *Merlin*. Given a bit more time, *Demons* could have displayed a similar upward trajectory.

Richard Edwards

"The monsters are, in the main, pretty well realised"



"You are surrounded by armed demons."



On patrol below London streets.



Glenister's accent wasn't great.



Gladius Thrip: great name.



"There must be a joke here somewhere..."



The fresh-faced Red Dwarf crew.



Don't they look young!



Series X has just finished on Dave.

RED DWARF (1988-PRESENT)

At 24 years old (albeit with a decade-long hole in the middle), *Red Dwarf* is one of the oldest situation comedies still running. But better sitcoms have come and gone, without its fandom's insatiable hunger for more. *Red Dwarf* fans claim to cherish their little show, but it does seem like they're locked in a moribund marriage, wistful of happier times, but in the knowledge that the sex now sucks.

Red Dwarf has always been a better sci-fi show than it is a comedy. It's not hard to be wowed by some of those brain-frazzling SF plots or by those filmic visuals, but then you have to ask yourself, is this actually funny? We're constantly being told it is, rather forcefully in fact by the less-than-subtle mugging and overcranked, smug-head performances, but it's a style of comedy that's 20 years out of date now.

Now, with its cast either chasing 50 or well past it, and half its writing staff long gone, *Red Dwarf* limps on, with its fans desperately forcing themselves to believe that this will be the season that makes them feel like they did when they were 15. Feel free to be awed by the SF, but don't tell me that *Red Dwarf* is a great sitcom. Maybe in an alternate universe where Alfred Molina and Alan Rickman took the lead roles, but certainly not in this one...

Steve O'Brien

"Be awed by the SF, but don't tell me it's a great sitcom"

STARGATE UNIVERSE (2009-11)

I hate *Stargate*.

Actually, that's not true. Hate is too strong a word for a franchise that has specialised in taking SF concepts and making them as bland as possible. I'm just utterly ambivalent about it... with one exception.

Yep, *Stargate Universe* with its surly crew, lack of aliens and light bulbs, and frequent trips back to Earth, is my favourite take on the franchise. It wasn't much like *SG-1* or *Atlantis*, but it felt like it was cut from the same cloth as the original movie. That may have been derivative as hell, but there was a sense of adventure there – something that *Universe* captured by making us feel every hardship the crew of the Destiny endured.

Robert Carlyle was fantastic casting as Dr Nicholas Rush. Yeah, he's clearly, ahem, inspired by Baltar in the same way that *Universe* was, ahem, inspired by the *Battlestar* reboot, but it doesn't matter. Carlyle's a fine actor, and he makes Rush both despicable and likeable. He's the biting, cynical antidote to *Stargate*'s usual fetishisation of the US military.

I'm aware that this is not the consensus opinion. *Stargate* fans don't seem to like *Universe* much. Their loss. I'd take two seasons of *Universe* over 10 years of Jack O'Neill's lame gags any day.

Will Salmon

"Carlyle makes Rush both despicable and likeable"



Carlyle is ace as Dr Nicholas Rush.



"We're so much better than SG-1."



A desert planet? In sci-fi?



Waistcoats never go out of fashion.



They'll be wishing they'd perished.



Beach, sea... what's the problem?



Cheer up, it's only a little crash...



They're not in Kansas any more.

LOST (2004-2010)

There's nothing – *nothing* – in the entire world of TV and film that infuriates me quite like *Lost*.

It has left indelible scars on my psyche. It killed the carefree lad I was and replaced him with the bitter, cynical man I have become.

Obviously, the only way you can get hurt that badly is by something you love, and boy did I love *Lost*. I was completely smitten. I loved *Lost* more than some folks love their first born child – right up until the final episode.

It's amazing how much impact one episode can have, but the final few minutes of *Lost* still fill me with uncontrollable rage to this day. That anyone could end a show as brilliant as *Lost* had been with such a shoddily conceived, horribly executed ending still shocks me now.

Quite aside from the fact it was a load of pan-religious nonsensical guff (as if that were not enough), it managed to retroactively destroy any respect I had for *Lost* and the people who made it.

I'd invested so much time, effort and cash into it that I felt like I'd literally been robbed, that all six seasons were little more than an exercise in commerce, that narrative satisfaction meant nothing to people I'd trusted. In the end, *Lost* was the ultimate long con, an ever-unravelling mystery that had no point, no purpose and no soul.

Rob Power

"The horribly executed ending still shocks me now"

STAR TREK: ENTERPRISE (2001-05)

With its return to the *Gulliver's Travels* aspects of space travel and buoyed by the sensawunda that comes with the discovery of strange new worlds, *Enterprise* cut through the overcomplicated, overwritten tangles of 24th century *Star Trek* to give us something fun and feisty.

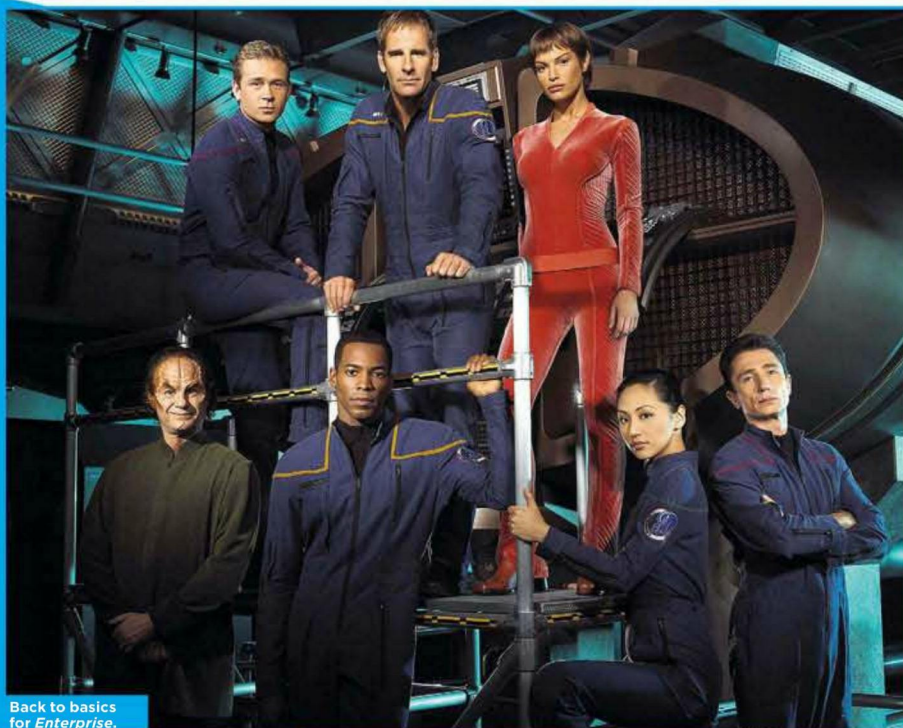
Consider this: everybody in *TNG*-era *Trek* is a superhero. Empaths, shapeshifters, and androids, boy geniuses, renegade Borg... hell, half the *Voyager* crew are also wanted terrorists.

But *Enterprise* took it back to its roots: one Vulcan, a no-nonsense captain, and a crew of astronauts and engineers with nothing but their good intentions to protect them. Sure, the first season fumbled around trying to find a formula that worked: but so did *The Next Generation* back in 1987.

By the third season, with the Xindi as Big Bad, *Enterprise* knew what it was about and it became space opera at its most exhilarating. Perhaps it was the influence of the (then brand new) *Battlestar Galactica*, but from 2003 until its sad cancellation, *Enterprise* was a darker, more intense series that coupled fan nods (like Dr Soong's enhanced Klingons) with emotional storytelling. Plus it had a couple of really hot women and a pet beagle on the crew: what's not to love?

Dave Bradley

"Space opera at its most exhilarating"



Back to basics for *Enterprise*.



"Oh boy... Sorry, wrong show."



Earth's finest, the Enterprise NX-01.



Boldly going. In spacesuits.



Amy and Rory: recently departed.



Carey Mulligan in the ace "Blink".



Flying sharks in a Christmas special.



Bill Bailey as an alien miner.

DOCTOR WHO (1963-PRESENT)

I really want to love *Doctor Who*. It's British, it's sci-fi, it's got interesting concepts and (finally) great special effects. But I just can't. It's too scatty, too wilfully convoluted and, worst of all, too inconsistent – for every episode that's clever, thrilling or poignant, there's another that's practically unwatchable. For every "Blink", there's a "Fear Her".

Its writers also have the annoying propensity for setting up a really strong narrative only to then spoil it by inserting silly ideas or scenes which become the overriding memory. It happens all-too-often, but is often reserved for the Christmas Specials: the ludicrous sky fish in "A Christmas Carol"; the high-speed robot in "The Doctor, The Widow and the Wardrobe". And while Steven Moffat does seem to have things back on track for this latest season, the "new" *Doctor Who* continues to commit crimes against storytelling.

So here's my list of things *Doctor Who* should stop: using the Sonic Screwdriver as a Get Out Of Jail Free card; having people run just to add drama; employing techno-babble in order to circumvent plot holes; the cringe-worthy dialogue – "Humany-wumany" (shudder); letting any old *Who* fan write shows. Four words: Mark Gatiss, space Spitfires... A little bit of the sci-fi in me died that day.

Steve Jarratt

"Too scatty, too convoluted, too inconsistent"

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AXE!

The brain-bursting
art of Simon Bisley

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FOR X-MEN?

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look at things"
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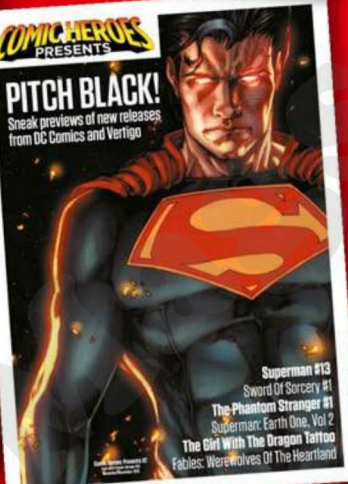
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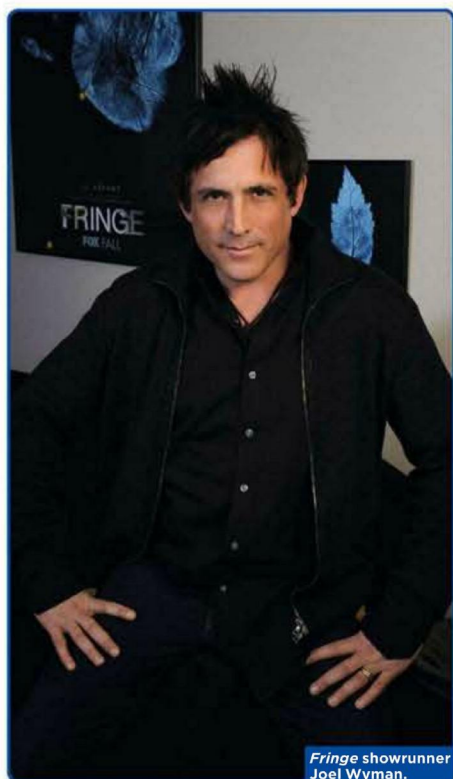
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Showrunners

They're the people responsible for bringing our favourite TV shows to the screen, but what does the job actually involve? *SFX* speaks to some top sci-fi showrunners to find out

Words • Tara Bennett



Fringe showrunner
Joel Wyman.

As long as their favourite shows have a great cast and are as funny or dramatic as billed, television audiences haven't traditionally spent much time worrying about the creative minds fostering their vision to the screen. That balance has shifted radically in the past 15 years, however, because the internet has revolutionised the connection between the people behind our favourite programmes and their dedicated audiences.

Show creators and executive producers (EPs) such as Joss Whedon, JJ Abrams, Russell T Davies and Steven Moffat are superstars because today's savvy audiences know that it's the wordsmiths that make a series special.

The select few that get the opportunity to craft a TV show and manage its day-to-day production are called showrunners. In the case of genre shows, showrunners don't just write the funny or the melodrama, they're also likely to hold serious meetings about werewolf blood splatter, or what a zombie fish puppet looks like onscreen. Yes, those kinds of decisions are as glorious as they sound – and an added bonus for the men and women who take on this demanding job.

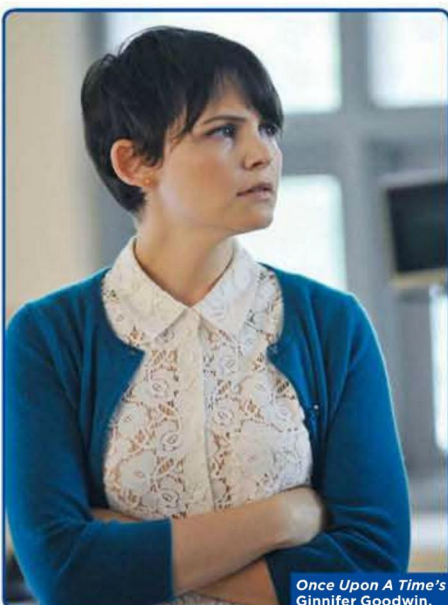
SFX talked exclusively to some of genre TV's best showrunners and asked them to tell us the good, the bad and the hilariously weird about their day-to-day.

MANAGER, WRITER... OR BOTH?

All showrunners have the final word when it comes to the scripts for their shows, but they also have to handle casting decisions, costuming, make-up and prop approvals, post-production reviews, taking notes from their network bosses and instituting those changes, while keeping within their budget. So, what do showrunners consider themselves as first: are they writers, managers or both?

Javier Grillo-Marxuach [showrunner, *The Middleman* (2008)]: Being a showrunner is first and foremost about having a vision. Second, it's about communicating that vision effectively to your staff on every level. You are basically, as a showrunner, the CEO of a start-up corporation that has one product, and that product has to be made by artisans. People look at television as stamping out widgets, but you're not. Even in a franchise, there has to be individual stories that a writer cares about enough to sit down and write. As a showrunner, you're the only one who truly knows what the product is supposed to look like within all of the variations of the format.

Edward Kitsis [co-showrunner, *Once Upon A Time*]: Damon Lindelof and Carlton Cuse [showrunners of *Lost*] always said to us that whatever you do, make sure you love it and you

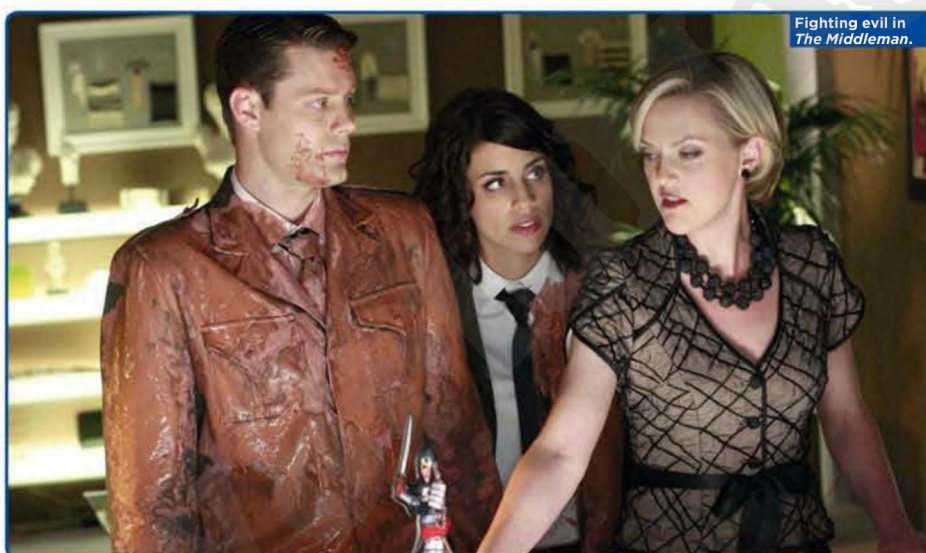
JH Wyman's
Fringe cast.Kitsis and Horowitz
learned the ropes
on *Lost*.*Once Upon a Time*'s
Ginnifer Goodwin.David Guarascio and
Moses Port of
Community.

have a passion for it. To us, that is the soundest advice because this job is so hard. There are so many times you can go down many different roads, but if you have a conviction and you believe in your vision then hopefully that will get you through.

David Guarascio [co-showrunner, *Community*]: As showrunners, we're really writers first. It's sitting in a room with writers who you really respect and think are funny, and you're hanging out and you're playing "what if", coming up with a story that you realise you can only do on this show and you can't do anyplace else. There's this new little bit of energy that enters the room in that moment and we can all tell we're onto something unique. That is the greatest part of working on *Community*.

Moses Port [co-showrunner, *Community*]: For us, with this [new] showrunning job in particular, it's check your ego at the door and be humble because there are a lot of people who have worked here that know the tone and sensibility of the show really deeply. It's been ingrained in their DNA for the last few years and that's what we wanted to feed off. It wasn't about coming in with a new attitude or viewpoint. All the seeds in the magic garden have been

"All the seeds in the magic garden have been planted and cultivated... so we just tend to that garden"

Fighting evil in
The Middleman.



Once Upon A Time:
fairytales with a twist.



Ouat's Adam
Horowitz...

"We've learned to surround ourselves with as many talented people as we can. The biggest challenge is always time and finding a way to manage it"



...and Edward
Kitsis.

planted and cultivated over the last three years, so we just want to tend that garden and pick that wonderful fruit. [Laughs]

WHO DOES WHAT?

Series have either a single showrunner, co-showrunners made up of long-time writing partners, or individual executive producers who can complement one another's skillsets to get all of the many jobs required to make a TV show happen. How do they share the work between themselves and their teams?

Edward Kitsis: For us, as we've been a partnership since college, we always operate as one person. The show is really our vision so we do everything together.

Adam Horowitz: Over our careers we've been able to experience a lot of the different worlds of making a show. For the first time running our own show, all those decisions end with us. It's a lot of pressure. We've learned to surround ourselves with as many talented people as we can. Being in the writers' room is a joy and now

it's a joy to be editing with our editors, or to be on set with our cast and crew. We have an amazing crew in Vancouver. The biggest challenge is always time and finding a way to manage it.

Edward Kitsis: That's the hardest thing. When we were on *Lost* or any other show we've ever been on, you only focus on your episode and what the next one is. Now there are days like today, for instance, where we're talking about the next episode. We actually get pages out for the episode that shoots tomorrow. We have to re-script the shoots after that and we're editing the episode that shot two weeks ago – and that's just one day. It's an unbelievable amount of responsibility but what a great job!

Javier Grillo-Marxuach: One of the things I loved most was learning the job is too big for any one person. It's a very big job. I met with [former *Supernatural* showrunner, now on *Revolution*] Eric Kripke and he said something along the lines of describing his relationship with Bob Singer [current *Supernatural* EP] saying that the job is bigger than one person and there's enough

work for multiple people. I went into it thinking that if I could communicate my vision successfully then delegating that vision would not be a bad thing. I loved telling people what I wanted and then seeing them go out and deliver it without having to be on top of them. It taught me if an idea is good enough it won't be destroyed by collaboration. [Laughs]

David Guarascio: There is no one thing that one of us does more than the other one. It's really about a partnership where you trust your creative partner, especially in TV where the trains are moving fast and there is always something needed. Usually I'm working on a rewrite while he's working on that next story with the writers. One of us will go to editing while the other goes to the stage.

BREAKING STORIES

JH Wyman [showrunner, *Fringe*]: It's funny because I think so many people would be so fascinated about how a television writers' room works. They actually think that each individual writer goes off and writes their



Anna Fricke's
Being Human USA.



The *Middleman* team
meet Mr Fusion.

Anna Fricke [showrunner, *Being Human USA*]:

In season one, it was just four writers: me, Jeremy [Carver, former co-showrunner, and Fricke's husband], Chris Dingess and Nancy Won, which was great but crazy. We all wrote a lot of episodes. In season two, we also brought in Lisa Randolph, Michael Ostrowski and Keto Shimizu. We've kept them all for season three and it's a very close-knit group of people. It's a real family. Now that Jeremy is showrunner for *Supernatural* it's been really great, and just domestically, Jeremy and I get along a lot better. [Laughs] It was a bit much, and we'd just had twins in season two so it was a little crazy. But it's been really great. Jeremy and I wrote the first episode of season three together and arced out the broad strokes of the season before he left. We did all of that together so we had a strong foundation.

GENRE'S A BIT DIFFERENT

Javier Grillo-Marxuach: One of my best days was having a props meeting for "The Boy-Band Superfan Interrogation" about the bad guy's lab. My prop guy asked me, "What do you want to see?" I asked about props from '80s movies, like Mr Fusion from *Back To The Future 2*. He said, "I have that in my garage". It turns out he built cars for *Back To The Future 2* and *3* and the next thing I know, Mr Fusion is on my desk. Everyone on staff took a picture with Mr Fusion! [See above left.]

Adam Horowitz: One of the strangest moments was when we killed a dwarf and we had to have involved conversations with the studio network, brand management and Disney about creating an original dwarf and then killing him. It's how we made our Stealthy character last season and gave him a heroic, sad end. When you find yourself in conversations about killing dwarves you know you're not on a straight drama. 🐼



The *Middleman*'s
Javier Grillo-Marxuach.

episode and comes back. That's not how it goes. We break the entire season, everybody is involved in everybody else's scripts, and I'm responsible [for them all] at the end of the day. Everybody does their stuff and carries their water. But it's not a writer off writing their own script.

For example, every season we would sit down for this big think tank – me, JJ, Jeff Pinkner, sometimes Akiva Goldsman, Bob Orci or Alex Kurtzman and some of our writers – and talk about the season. We talk about what we want to get across over the year. Everybody has these great ideas and throws everything against the wall to form an idea of where we're going. I'm not good at improvising or doing things willy-nilly. There are a lot of writers who are, but I'm just not one of those guys. I have to know where I'm going in order to use my stories to tell thematically what I am doing. I would never start going until I knew where I was going to end up. When you know that, every single scene is an opportunity to make that clear and enrich it.

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TV Tropes

An SFX production

INTERGALACTIC VOYAGE

“In space, everyone can
hear bad dialogue”

Pilot episode

The pitch: In the distant future, the Human Inter-Planetary Preservation Organisation (HIPPO) travels across the galaxy in their bucket-of-bolts star vessel, the Venture, to maintain peace and engage in an endless series of the most heinous tropes ever committed to sci-fi television. Meanwhile, in the shadows, a darkness lurks...

Teleplay by Jordan Farley

Final Draft

Revised: 13 October 2012

Marketing strategy: Strenuously deny the show is sci-fi. It's not about space, a spaceship or aliens, even though they're in it. It's really about "the people". →

FADE IN

EXT. EMPTY SPACE

The Star Vessel Venture emerges from hyperspace into a seemingly vacant quadrant, making a "whoosh" as it passes the camera, despite existing in a vacuum.

INT. COMMAND DECK

FIRST OFFICER GILLESPIE (loyal, reckless, bearded)

"Captain, it's quiet. Too quiet."

EXT. Suddenly, out of nowhere, an alien warship appears.

INT. COMMAND DECK

COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER SPARROW (token hot female)

"Incoming communication, all hailing frequencies."

VIEWSCREEN - GRATH COMMANDER appears

GRATH COMMANDER (funny forehead bump and looks like he has a penchant for S&M)

"Earthlings. Prepare to die!"

CAPTAIN ANDERSON (stoic, square-jawed, a man's man)

"All crew to battle stations!"

JIMMY JONES (annoying kid psychic)

"Hang on, if this is the first documented contact with this species, how is it possible that we have compatible protocols for transmission of data? Why are they speaking English? And why do they look just like us with donuts on their heads?"

ENTIRE CREW

"SHUT UP JIMMY!"

EXT. Two static ships fire slow-moving lasers. The Venture takes a critical hit.

INT. An explosion sends several crew members flying as the screen shakes.

DIAGNOSTICS OFFICER YORN (human/alien half-breed warrior, soft heart)

"Captain, all systems are down."

JIMMY JONES

"Then how come the artificial gravity is still working?"

ENTIRE CREW

"SHUT UP JIMMY!"

CUT TO: Engine Room, where a crew member is fiddling about with a shiny, crystal thing.

ENGINEER O'REILLY (Irish, irascible, probably drunk)

"Cap'ain, you know that Alien technology we found on our last mission? I can use it to reverse the polarity and save us!"

CUT TO: CAPTAIN ANDERSON, talking into a comms device.

"Then what are you waiting for, an invitation? Make it done."

ENGINEER O'REILLY

"Aye, aye sir."

EXT. And like that, the Grath ship's lasers bounce off the Venture, obliterating the Grath ship in the process, generating an unnecessarily flashy Praxis Effect.

INT. BRIDGE

CAPTAIN ANDERSON

"Good work men. If anyone needs me I'll be in my quarters mourning my dead wife and son, to prove my complexity and that I'm a man in touch with my emotions."

The lift doors open with a "swoosh!" There, before Anderson, is his doppelganger.

Let's up the human drama. Just thinking out loud here, but do we need to set this in space?

CAPTAIN ANDERSON

"What devilry is this?"

CAPTAIN ANDERSON 2

"I am you, and you are me. I am your clone, created by a race of superior beings, known as the Elders, to evaluate humanity's potential, or the need to have its existence terminated."

CAPTAIN ANDERSON

"Terminated? Over my dead body!"

JIMMY JONES

"Hang on, if he's a clone, then why does he have exactly the same haircut, memories and manner of speaking. Surely upbringing is just as important as genetics."

Let's make sure he's not too alien-looking - we want him to be sexy

Keep the make-up simple (ie cheap).

Let's not overdo the technobabble - this isn't the Open University

ENTIRE CREW
"SHUT UP JIMMY!"

A fight breaks out between ANDERSON I and 2. Security officers emerge from a side door.

SECURITY OFFICER GRIMES
"I can't tell which is which!"

Can we cast an actor with an identical twin brother to save costs? What are the Ashmores up to at the moment?

CALCULUS (the Venture's dead-eyed resident android, bad contacts, greasy hair)
"I calculate with 98% certainty that the Captain Anderson currently under restraint is the real Anderson."

The crew opens fire. Their laser guns recoil, despite the fact that they have no moving parts. They roll over the lifeless corpse — Anderson is clutching a photo of his wife and son.

SECURITY OFFICER GRIMES
"Oh my gods, what have we done!"

CUT TO: The Grath ship arriving. We've jumped back 20 minutes in time, but only Grimes seems to notice. He tries to change the future, Groundhog Day-style, until he remembers the photo.

CALCULUS
"I calculate with 98% certainty that the Captain Anderson currently under restraint is the real Anderson."

Yawn. Who is this guy?

GRIMES
"No! It's the other one! Look in his pocket!"

OFFICERS check ANDERSON I's pocket, help him to his feet and laser handcuff ANDERSON 2.

CAPTAIN ANDERSON
"Throw him in the brig! Grimes, good job. Take some R 'N' R with the green-skinned space babe delegation we're escorting. But stay on board, because this is the bottle episode."

CUT TO: MEDICAL BAY
DOCTOR CHAVEZ is tending to GROUND OFFICER SPEED, and some random guy wearing a red shirt. Both are writhing in agony on sterile white beds.

DOCTOR CHAVEZ (bossy, but good at her job)
"Quick, these men have been exposed to an enormous dose of radiation, they don't have long." Before random guy wearing a red shirt can be given an anti-radiation pill he dies. No one cares. CHAVEZ puts the pill in Speed's mouth, but he flatlines too.

Liking this. ER was massive

DOCTOR CHAVEZ
"No, godammit! Dammit all to hell!"

CHAVEZ looks away. When she turns back, the bed is empty. SPEED has ascended to a higher plane and turned into an Elder. He appears before Anderson as a god amongst men.

CUT TO: BRIDGE
GOD SPEED (elegant robes and weird spiral headpiece)
"Puny humans. Give me one reason why I shouldn't remove this ship's oxygen right now."

CAPTAIN ANDERSON
"Because we're capable of love. And compassion. And there wouldn't be a show if we were all dead."

GOD SPEED
"Your logic is sound. Farewell, An-der-son."

JIMMY JONES
"Love? We survived the wrath of a vengeful god because we're capable of love? What a crock."

Not liking this kid. He needs more warmth

ENTIRE CREW
"SHUT UP JIMMY!"

CAPTAIN ANDERSON
"Navigation Officer Soklov, take us into hyperspace."

NAVIGATION OFFICER SOKLOV
"Co-ordinates, captain?"

CAPTAIN ANDERSON
"What do I care? Just push the damn button."

CREDITS.



Ulysses & Co

Just after-school entertainment? Pah! Here's what we learned about the world from watching 1980s cartoons

Words • Tom Hawker

Movies have a lot to answer for: "So the film's a hit with the kids, has a built-in audience and we own the rights? Why isn't this on TV already?" Thus the likes of *The Real Ghostbusters*, *Teen Wolf*, *RoboCop* and *Beetlejuice* were all retooled – and deballed, in some instances – for after-school entertainment, while Conan underwent a facelift and gained a spring-action punch for *He-Man*. Of course, the flannel-shirted colossus bestriding the whole era is George Lucas; not only with direct spin-offs such as *Droids* and *Ewoks*, but whose galaxy far, far away was apparently the most regular feature of whatever Venn diagram was used to pitch ideas – whether it was the epic archetypal adventure or (more commonly) the badass space-tech.

MASK, aka *Mobile Armored Strike Kommand*.

A SPOONFUL OF SCI-FI HELPS THE CULTURE GO DOWN

You know what makes 2,800-year-old Greek myths interesting? Lightsabers and rocketpacks, that's what. *Ulysses 31* took Homer's epic poem *The Odyssey* and filtered it through the twin prisms of *Star Wars* and anime – making it a first glimpse for many at what was happening across the Pacific. Space Bee Gee Ulysses heads off an intergalactic quest in search of the Kingdom of Hades, aided by his son, two blue aliens, a small annoying robot and, perhaps most crucially, the most kick-ass theme tune in a decade, burrowing its way into your ear like a Ceti eel.

CARS WERE COOL...

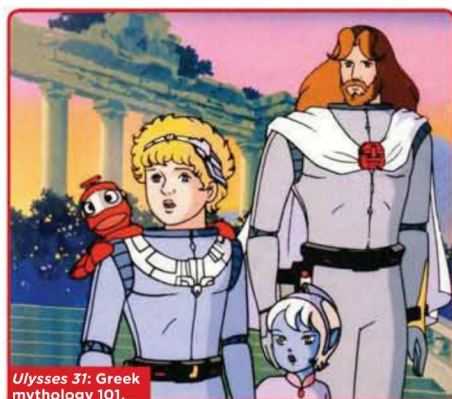
After *Star Wars* and *The Spy Who Loved Me*, the Mystery Machine just didn't quite cut it anymore. Nearly every vehicle scorching down the cartoon world's main streets looked like it had been on *Pimp My Ride* as masterminded by James

Cameron after too many Red Bulls: part racing beasts, part kill-tanks, with every available bit of space covered with missile launchers or gun turrets. Or – like the vehicles in *MASK* – they had ability to transform into another machine completely. Or even better, robots...

...BUT ROBOTS WERE COOLER

Well, they didn't name a dance after *He-Man*, did they? Robots were '80s cartoons' ultimate stars, with their huge robiceps, city-splating firepower and samurai visuals (inherited from the franchise's mecha anime origins). The likes of *Voltron*, *Robotech*, *Go-Bots* and – the game-changing – *Transformers* seemed like they'd, well, crash-landed on Earth from another planet after a brutal civil war. Part of the appeal may well have been their superhuman indestructibility in the face of the Cold War's nuclear threat, although, more





Ulysses 31: Greek mythology 101.



Massive robots were big business.



Turtles talked. Kids listened.



"You know what makes 2,800-year-old Greek myths interesting? Lightsabers and rocketpacks, that's what"

importantly, they were mega-radical fighting machines. And very fun to play with.

POCKET MONEY WAS TO BE SPENT

After the phenomenon of *Transformers*, most shows came complete with an extensive and expensive toy range. Sometimes – like *Centurions* ("Power Xtreme!") and *MASK* – the toys were actually better than the cartoons, and usually came with a range of tiny weapons, gadgets and accessories that made them every bit as interactive as your sister's Barbie. This meant that every Christmas threatened to bankrupt your parents while 25 years later, you're still turning up Storm Shadow's long lost dagger – from his cute ninja backpack – under your old bookshelf.

GIRLS AND KIDS AREN'T ALLOWED

There's a reason no one's favourite Transformer was Arcee, the pinkbot. As much as we'd like to say that Cheetara and She-Ra were empowered, strong role models, it's difficult to get around the fact that most females – don't ask us where Zoltar fits into this – were largely token characters in a masculine world of reaffirmed family values: rational, maternal figures in irrational strippers' clothing. Likewise, most of the kids were well-meaning hotheads getting

into scrapes, rather than youngsters begging their mum for an advance on their pocket money to buy a Bruce Sato toy.

EVERY GANG HAS A SMALL DWEED TO BE BULLIED

The most regular ingredient of most '80s cartoons was a diminutive comic relief – usually an alien or a robot – whose sole purpose was to cause zany problems and, mainly, to be laughed at (always heartily, with shoulders back and hands on hips) to mark the episode's end. The likes of Nono, T-Bot, Snarf, Orko and Slimer should form some sort of support group for clumsy sidekicks of restricted height. "I accidentally fell off the table and then they all started laughing at me. I needed three stitches."

AND DON'T PLAY WITH MATCHES

Of course, the key lessons to be learned were the health and safety messages that the characters would, very directly, tell you in public service announcements. The likes of *GI Joe*, *Masters Of The Universe*, *Transformers* and, later, *Teenage Mutant Hero Turtles* would explain that maybe headbutting people like Ram Man wasn't a great idea. "Now you know," as the Joes would say, "and knowing is half the battle". Thankfully, the other half of the battle usually involved killing evil in the face with a laser axe. 🗡️



He-Man's fashion sense is strong.



Slimer: is he afraid of himself?

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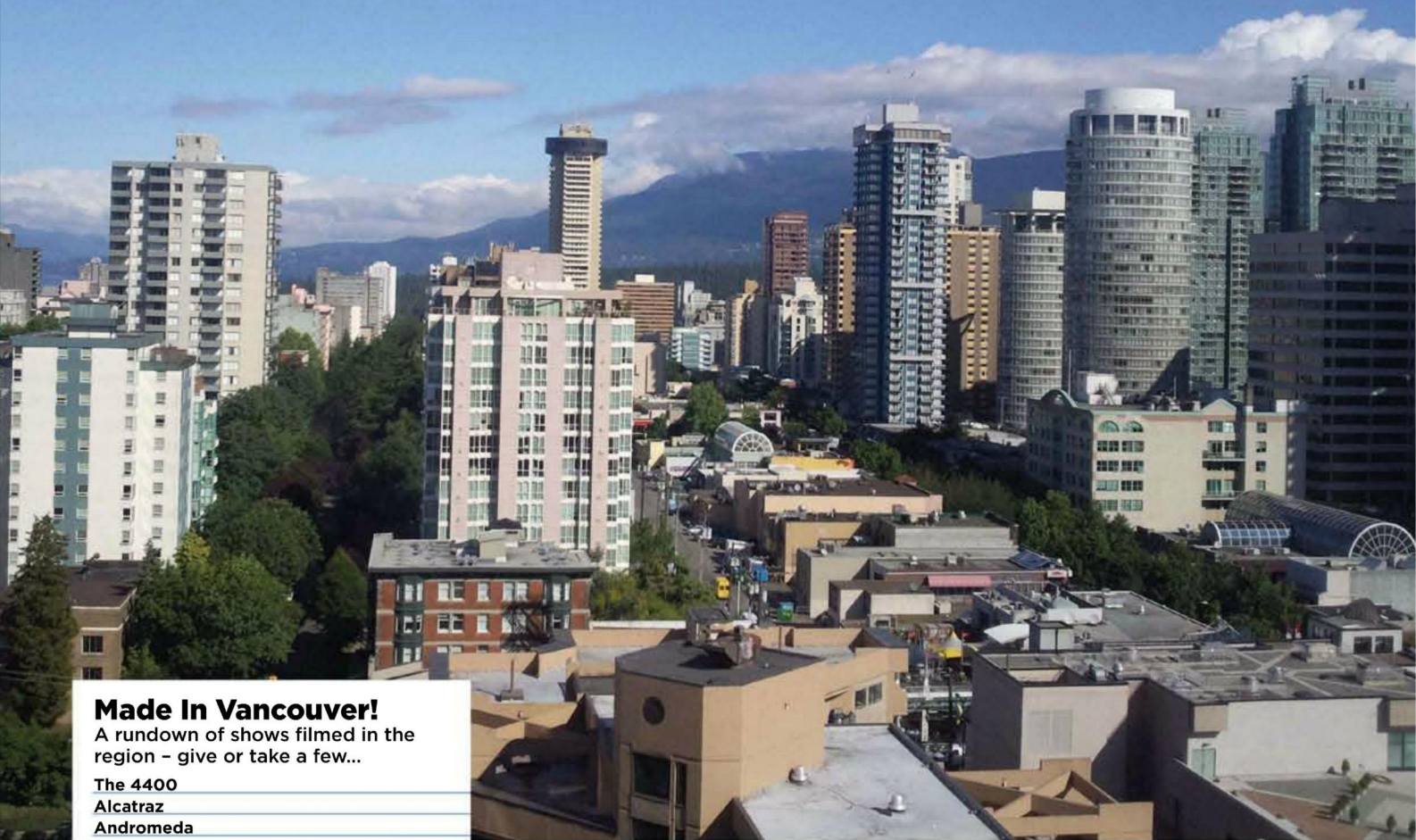
FROM THE MAKERS OF **PC GAMER** MAGAZINE



Vancouver

Words • Jayne Nelson

Why the Canadian Hollywood is one of sci-fi TV's biggest stars



Made In Vancouver!

A rundown of shows filmed in the region – give or take a few...

The 4400
Alcatraz
Andromeda
Battlestar Galactica
Blood Ties
Caprica
Continuum* (one of the few shows actually set in Vancouver)
Dark Angel
Dead Like Me
The Dead Zone
Eureka
First Wave
Flash Gordon
Fringe*
Highlander: The Series
Jake 2.0
Jeremiah
Kingdom Hospital
Kyle XY
The Lone Gunmen
Masters Of Horror
Millennium
Once Upon A Time*
The Outer Limits
Poltergeist: The Legacy
Reaper
The Sentinel
Sliders
Smallville
Stargate Atlantis
Stargate SG-1
Stargate Universe
Supernatural*
Tru Calling
The X-Files

*currently filming

Once upon a time you could virtually guarantee that if a TV show was set in America, it was filmed in either Hollywood or New York – or failing that, Hollywood pretending to be New York. But times change, and for the past few decades Canada has been doubling for the dear old US of A quite nicely, thank you. One part of Canada in particular has become so popular with filmmakers that it's now the third largest centre for production in North America and has been nicknamed "Hollywood North".

Vancouver, stand up and take a bow.

The British Columbian city and its environs have provided the home of everything from the *Twilight* films (set in rainy Forks, Washington, a mere stone's throw from Canada anyway) to *Watchmen* (which built an entire street in the Warner backlot that's still being used by shows such as *Fringe* and *Supernatural*). But when it comes to television, you'd be amazed at how much is filmed here. In 2011, 69 shows were

filmed in Vancouver, not including 12 pilots. Of these, 13 were science fiction or fantasy series (14 if you include *True Blood*, which shoots in the US but farms out its VFX to the talented effects companies in Vancouver).

SCENE STEALER

Clearly there's a love affair going on between our genre and this diverse, cosmopolitan city. It's one most of us probably only noticed when *The X-Files* made foggy forests a household phenomenon in the '90s – no other show, before or since, has featured so many people standing by mossy logs in the rain. The *Stargate* franchise came close, utilising Vancouver's many resources for its 14-year run, and today you can still see those foggy forests and mossy logs in shows such as *Once Upon A Time* and *Supernatural*.

Vancouver has become as much of a character in the shows we watch as the people who star in them. It may rain a lot in British Columbia, but boy, does it look good...

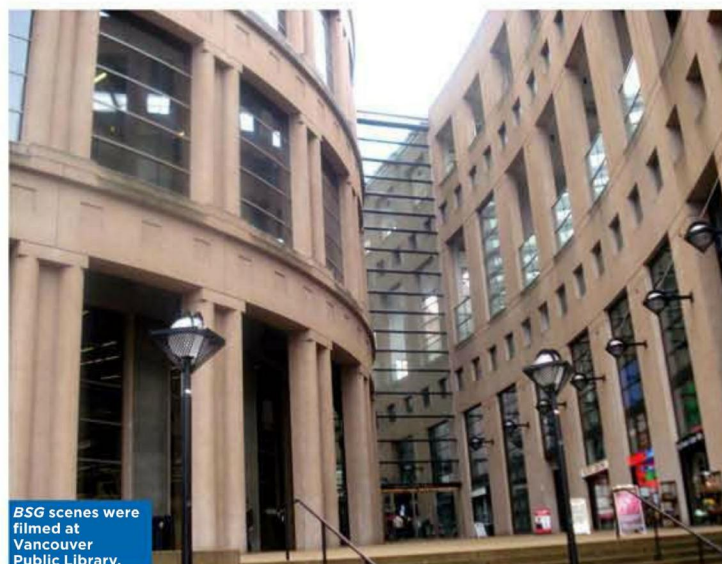
"Clearly there's a love affair going on between our genre and this diverse, cosmopolitan city"



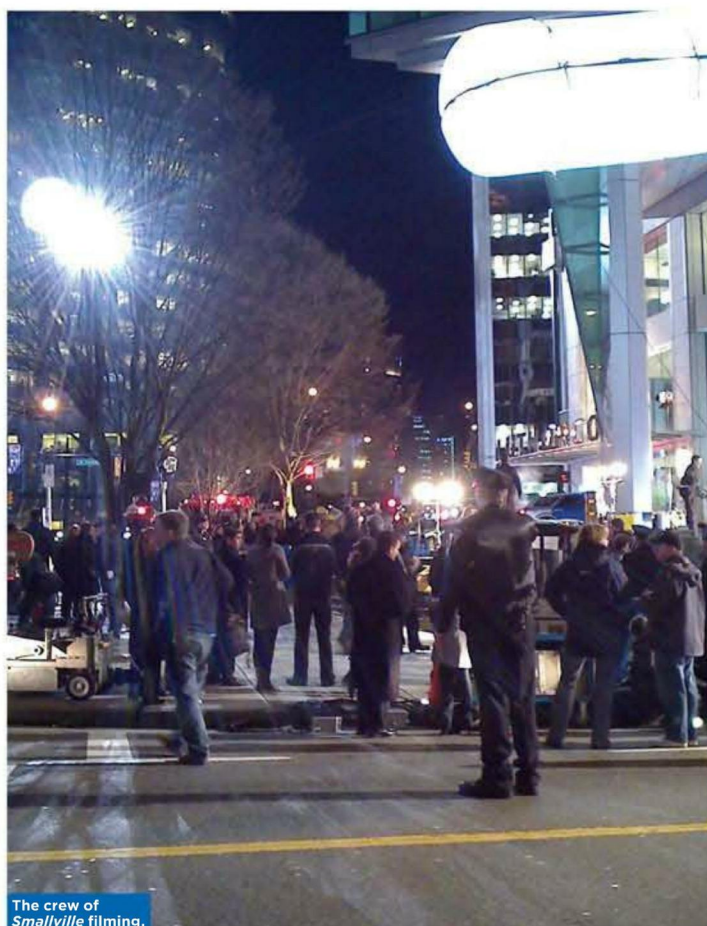
The Art Deco Marine Building...



...is *Smallville*'s Daily Planet HQ.



BSG scenes were filmed at Vancouver Public Library.



The crew of *Smallville* filming.



All roads lead to Burrard Street.

Location, Location, Location

Vancouver's most notable shooting spots

The Marine Building

Once the tallest building in Vancouver but now dwarfed by the city's ever-rising skyscrapers, the Art Deco Marine Building doubled for the Daily Planet in *Smallville* (with several extra floors added thanks to CGI) and the Baxter Building in the *Fantastic Four* films. If a TV show needs a generic tall building, chances are it's this one they'll use in the establishing shot.

Riverview Hospital

The daddy of all locations is this grand building in Coquitlam, a mental health facility which loans out sections for film crews. Once you've recognised it – look for a Colonial-style entrance with white columns if they're filming from the front, or red brick walls and barred windows if they're not – you'll be spotting it everywhere, from *Fringe* to *The X-Files* (which made full use of its spookiness; the place is supposed to be haunted).



The University of British Columbia stands in for Harvard in *Fringe*.



The lush greenery of Stanley Park.



The red steel of Bridge Studios.

Riverview's corridors, wards, rooms and even basements are used so extensively we can't even begin to imagine how many coats of paint have been applied over the years.

Forests

If you're looking to film in misty, moody woods you can't go wrong with British Columbia's many temperate rainforests, each filled with majestic Douglas firs, red cedar and Western hemlocks. You don't even have to go very far: Downtown sits next door to the beautiful Stanley Park, where it's quite possible to get lost among the trees while still a stone's throw away from a Starbucks.

Studios

Many of the city's studios are situated in the Burnaby area, which has a plethora of industrial parks combined with pretty rivers and coastline. The most recognisable studio complex is Bridge Studios, former home of the *Stargate* franchise, with its distinctive red steel framework. The former bridge-building works provided the steel for parts of the Golden Gate Bridge. 🏠



Continuum is filmed and set in the city.

Direct From Vancouver

Susan Croome from the British Columbia Film Commission explains why Vancouver draws so many filmmakers...

What attracts so many film and TV productions to come and shoot in Vancouver?

British Columbia (BC) has built a solid reputation and track record for delivering excellence to filmmakers, both in terms of production value and quality, and all at a highly competitive price. Offering close proximity to and in the same time zone as Los Angeles, experienced and highly skilled cast and crew, world class infrastructure, the capacity to crew 40 productions simultaneously, expertise in visual effects, digital animation and digital media and cutting edge post-production facilities, British Columbia has every competitive advantage. Add in BC's diversity of locations and highly competitive Provincial and Federal tax credits, and you can see why British Columbia is home to hundreds of film and television productions each year!

What does the city and its environs have that you can't find in, say, Hollywood?

British Columbia can double for almost anywhere, from Shanghai to New York, Afghanistan or Forks, Washington [home of *Twilight*]. The region offers a world of looks for filmmakers. Ancient rainforests, coastal landscapes, arid deserts, forgotten heritage towns, mountainous roads and urban settings that can play quaint, gritty or post-modern contemporary – it's all here.

There are a lot of sci-fi and fantasy shows filmed in Vancouver. Why do you think this is?

BC's reputation as the sci-fi film and television capital first began with the dystopian, paranormal settings found in *The X-Files*. Vancouver's wet grey weather and nondescript skyline made the perfect backdrop for a generic modern city. This look, combined with the huge wealth of location opportunities needed to create the highly imaginative worlds within the science fiction genre, helped to make Vancouver an obvious choice for sci-fi settings.

It's nice to see that *Continuum* not only films in Vancouver, it's also proudly set in Vancouver. Does it ever bother you that so many people around the world see your city and its gorgeous scenery, and assume it's somewhere in the US? Or don't you mind?

We don't mind that Vancouver masquerades as somewhere else – the city's ability to stand in for locations all around the world has been its key strength and built the foundation of BC's reputation as a cost-effective centre for film and television production. At the same time, we're extremely happy to see the success of *Continuum*, which is written and produced by homegrown BC talent. *Continuum* is a shining example of the huge talent of BC producers and creative artists who have the critical skills and experience needed to consistently produce award-winning work.



Exclusive
cast
interviews!

Westeros

Words •

Rob Power,
Stephen Jewell



As we prepare for the return of *Game Of Thrones*, it's time to strike out beyond the Wall to discover who's joining the cast in 2013, catch up with some familiar faces and speculate on what to expect from season three...



Has *Game Of Thrones* really only been with us for two seasons? The fact that it feels like it's been on TV for a decade has undoubtedly got a lot to do with the sheer scope of the thing. Dragons and White Walkers, frozen wastes and baked deserts, it's the show that has catapulted televisual fantasy into the stratosphere. *Game Of Thrones* has become a bona fide phenomenon – turning the mainstream on to adult fantasy and adored by critics – and next spring the show will be returning for its third season. But what can we expect when telly-land's grandest epic returns for another outing?

There's no doubt that season two was an impressive achievement, building on the first by piling on the intrigue, the spectacle, the sex and the slaughter. We last witnessed Westeros in a state of post-battle comedown, with ominous signs of further turmoil ahead.

Next year's season will have myriad plots to forward, each one as gripping as the next.

In many ways, season three is when things start getting *really* interesting on Westeros. Showrunners and screenwriters DB Weiss and David Benioff have always said that this is the season they've been most looking forward to, and fans of the novels will have at least some indication why. Up until now, each season has represented one of George RR Martin's novels, but things get a little more complicated as we reach the third book, *A Storm Of Swords*. Lengthier and more diverse in terms of characters, locations and massive setpieces, there's a lot to fit in, which is why this is the first book to be split across two seasons.

THE LAY OF THE LANDING

Casting announcements and calls can give us a fairly good indication of the shape the coming season is likely to take. Arguably two of the biggest roles to be cast so far are Diana Rigg as Olenna Tyrell and Ciarán Hinds as Mance Rayder, the King Beyond The Wall, and they both hold plenty of promise for Westerosi wonderment. Olenna, Margaery's grandmother, is sure to become a key player in the political games at King's Landing as she attempts to protect her granddaughter from Joffrey and her family's interests from the Lannisters. Mance Rayder meanwhile is a name that has been spoken with fear throughout the first two seasons, and now we're finally getting to meet the legendary ex-member of the Night's Watch turned king of the Wildlings.

It also looks like we're set to get thoroughly acquainted with the Brotherhood Without Banners, a rogue band of outlaws only fleetingly mentioned in season two, led by Beric Dondarrion. We've met Dondarrion before – he was dispatched by Ned Stark to capture horse-decapitating nut-job the Mountain in season one – and he formed the Brotherhood shortly after Ned lost his head. Dondarrion has been re-cast, with Richard Dormer now in the role, and will be joined by former Dennis Pennis Paul Kaye as fire-wielding priest Thoros Of Myr and Philip McGinley as Anguy, an archer in the Brotherhood.

There are more than a few new names that are giving genre fans plenty to get excited about too. *Merlin's* Clive Russell has been cast as Catelyn's uncle, Brynden "The Blackfish" Tully, while Ellie Kendrick (Tom's geeky girlfriend Allison in *Being Human*) will be joining the fun as Meera Reed. Finally, *Misfits'* very own Mr Invisible Iwan Rheon will play Ramsay Snow, the son of Roose Bolton and a bastard in more ways than one.

Of course, these aren't the only tantalising casting announcements (see our Fresh Meat guide opposite for the full run-down on Westeros's latest inhabitants), but they certainly confirm that we'll be seeing an escalation in the situations at both King's Landing and north of the wall in Wildling territory, while hinting at some of the plotlines from the novels that are likely to be focused on.

Filming has been taking place in Northern Ireland, Croatia and Iceland, all locations we saw last season, with only the addition of Morocco suggesting we'll see somewhere entirely new. *A Storm Of Swords* introduces a number of new locations, especially for Daenerys who visits slaver cities including Astapor and Meereen as she grows her influence. It seems likely the new Moroccan locations are doubling for one or all of these cities.

Importantly, season three represents a turning point for the show as it transforms into its own distinct entity. Season one was a pretty direct book adaptation, while season two saw several notable deviations from the novels which will have a butterfly effect on season three. The key moments will no doubt remain, but getting to them is going to be a lot more interesting for everyone if the routes taken are less familiar – no longer will long-terms fans of the books be safe in the knowledge that they know what's coming round the corner.

If there's one thing you can be certain of though, it's that season three is going to be a bloody affair. *A Storm Of Swords* holds a special place in the hearts of George RR Martin fans as the book with the biggest shocks and the most hardcore scenes to date. For the show, this means the twists will be bigger and more shocking, the betrayals harder to handle, the battles more riveting and the politics even more deadly. Brace yourself, because things are about to get wild...

Game Of Thrones returns to Sky Atlantic in spring 2013.

"The twists will be bigger and more shocking, the betrayals harder to handle, the battles more riveting..."

Fresh Meat

Meet the new faces about to be thrown to the lions (and the Direwolves) in season three



Anguy

PLAYED BY: Philip McGinley
AFFILIATION: Brotherhood Without Banners

SPECIAL SKILLS: Archery
LOVER OR FIGHTER? A renowned fighter and exceptionally handy with a bow and arrow. You might recognise McGinley as Corrie's Tom Kerrigan, although he also had a bit part in *Prometheus*.



Daario Naharis

PLAYED BY: Ed Skrein

AFFILIATION: Sellsword
SPECIAL SKILLS: Seduction, Dothraki curved blades

LOVER OR FIGHTER? A member of the Stormcrows, a band of unruly sellswords, he meets Dany as she makes her way across Slaver's Bay and is struck by her beauty. In the novels, he has a three-pronged blue beard. Nice.



Edmure Tully

PLAYED BY: Tobias Menzies

AFFILIATION: House Tully
SPECIAL SKILLS: Loyalty

LOVER OR FIGHTER? Cat's brother and heir to Riverrun, Edmure doesn't quite have the fighter's reputation of his uncle, but is loyal and – crucially – unmarried, a fact that is sure to come in handy when trying to placate the Freys over Robb's wedding.



Mance Rayder

PLAYED BY: Ciarán Hinds

AFFILIATION: Wildling

SPECIAL SKILLS: Inspirational leader

LOVER OR FIGHTER? The King Beyond The Wall is a semi-legendary character. A member of the Night's Watch who went AWOL, he has worked to join the disparate tribes of Wildlings and is getting ready to head south.



Meera Reed

PLAYED BY: Ellie Kendrick

AFFILIATION: House Reed

SPECIAL SKILLS: Hunting with frog spear

LOVER OR FIGHTER? The older brother of Jojen, Meera is incredibly able for her years and can happily live in the wild. She's been sent north with her brother to aid Bran and House Stark in whatever way she can.



Beric Dondarrion

PLAYED BY: Richard Dormer

AFFILIATION: Brotherhood Without Banners

SPECIAL SKILLS: Leadership
LOVER OR FIGHTER?

Leader of the Brotherhood, Dondarrion is Westeros's Robin Hood, defending the small folk from being brutalised in the war that rages around them, and upholding Ned Stark's values.



Jojen Reed

PLAYED BY: Thomas Sangster

AFFILIATION: House Reed

SPECIAL SKILLS: Greensight

LOVER OR FIGHTER? Son of Stark bannerman Howland Reed, Jojen is a strangely wise boy who has visions that help guide him – and others – onto the right path. An important House Stark ally, he becomes close friends with Bran.



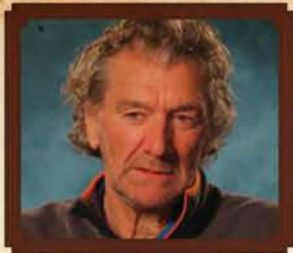
Missandei

PLAYED BY: Nathalie Emmanuel

AFFILIATION: House Targaryen/Daenerys

SPECIAL SKILLS: Linguist

LOVER OR FIGHTER? A slave girl freed by Danaerys, Missandei quickly becomes her close friend and servant, invaluable thanks to her knowledge of languages and unsullied troops.



Brynden "The Blackfish" Tully

PLAYED BY: Clive Russell

AFFILIATION: House Tully

SPECIAL SKILLS: Council, warfare, bravery

LOVER OR FIGHTER?

Renowned as one of the greatest knights going, The Blackfish is not a man to mess with. As Catelyn's uncle, he is close to Robb Stark as a military advisor.



Ramsay Snow

PLAYED BY: Iwan Rheon

AFFILIATION: House Bolton

SPECIAL SKILLS: Violence

LOVER OR FIGHTER? The bastard son of Roose Bolton, Ramsay is a merciless psychotic with some particularly troubling daddy issues. Desperate to make his way into a position of power, he is ashamed of his bastard heritage.



Shireen Baratheon

PLAYED BY: Kerry Ingram

AFFILIATION: House Baratheon/Stannis

SPECIAL SKILLS: Sweetness, greyscale survival

LOVER OR FIGHTER?

Stannis's daughter, while being generally happy and sweet, was afflicted with skin disease Greyscale at a young age. She is often to be found with her fool, Moon Boy.



Olenna Tyrell

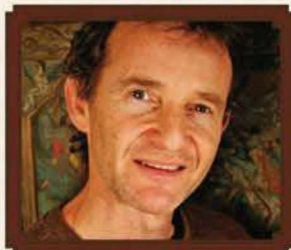
PLAYED BY: Diana Rigg

AFFILIATION: House Tyrell

SPECIAL SKILLS: Diplomacy, cunning, experience

LOVER OR FIGHTER?

Known as the 'Queen Of Thorns', the matriarch of House Tyrell is the mother of Margaery and Loras. Adept at playing the game, she is determined to ensure her House is powerful and secure.



Qyburn

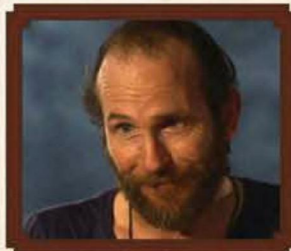
PLAYED BY: Anton Lesser

AFFILIATION: House Lannister/Cersei

SPECIAL SKILLS: Surgery

LOVER OR FIGHTER? A

disgraced former maester who lost his chain due to unethical behaviour, Qyburn is a talented healer who rode with sellsword companies. He is determined to return to a position of power.



Thoros Of Myr

PLAYED BY: Paul Kaye

AFFILIATION: Brotherhood Without Banners

SPECIAL SKILLS: Healing, fire manipulation

LOVER OR FIGHTER? Famed for his use of a flaming sword, Thoros joins Dondarrion's Brotherhood and becomes a close ally. A priest of the fire god R'hllor, he was a loyal friend to Robert Baratheon.



Orell

PLAYED BY: Mackenzie Crook

AFFILIATION: Wildling

SPECIAL SKILLS: Extremely talented skinchanger

LOVER OR FIGHTER? Bran's got nothing on Orell, a Wildling skinchanger from the far north. A close ally of Mance Rayder, Orell is able to manipulate the mind of almost any animal.



Selyse Baratheon

PLAYED BY: Tara Fitzgerald

AFFILIATION: House Baratheon/R'hllor

SPECIAL SKILLS: Worship

LOVER OR FIGHTER?

Stannis's wife and a fervent believer in the red god R'hllor, Selyse was crucial in converting her husband. Her relationship with Stannis is extremely strained as she has never given him a son.



Tormund Giantsbane

PLAYED BY: Kristofer Hivju

AFFILIATION: Wildling

SPECIAL SKILLS: Raiding

LOVER OR FIGHTER? One of Mance Rayder's most trusted lieutenants and a larger than life character, north of the Wall Tormund is a well known raider, fighter and leader of warriors and a respected figure among the free folk.

CAST Q&As

Daenerys Targaryen

Emilia Clarke on going
blonde and getting naked...

You've actually got brown hair, so you don't look much like Daenerys...

I read the books and realised that she's a tall, willowy blonde, which obviously isn't me at all. But we eventually managed to find the right wig colour and, as soon as that happened, everything else fell into place. It's a huge collaborative process between the costume designers, the producers and George RR Martin and me. But it's HBO so they wouldn't have been satisfied unless everything was spot-on perfect.

Were you daunted by the amount of nudity involved, particularly in the first season?

When I first got the role, they said that there might be a bit of nudity, and then I filmed it. I was a young, naïve girl just like her and I was completely petrified, terrified and horrified by what I had to do. But I knew that that was where I had to go with Dany to get the result that was needed. It was a hugely important task to have done so that the audience can physically see what she went through – see some of the things that she had to overcome – to find the empathy for her at the end. That's the glorious thing about *Game Of Thrones*: it reflects real life, it's not trying to be candy floss pretend, it's trying to show a harsh reality. As an actor, it's great to be able to get into that kind of thing. Dany was with me the whole way through and we kind of did it together. It was when I was doing the difficult things that I really connected with her as a character so now she's in my blood – and in season two I got to wear clothes.





Jon Snow

Kit Harrington on sword fights and Jon's journey

Are you enjoying developing Jon Snow's character from season to season?

The important thing for me in the first season was not to get too far ahead of myself. I realised that Jon has got this huge journey to go on – touch wood, the series continues and we go for six years – so I didn't want to jump too far ahead and for people to then be bored with him in the fourth and fifth series because he's no longer developing. So it was important in the first season to find him at the start as an undeveloped human being, as a troubled person who doesn't fully understand the world he's in or who he is, who doesn't know where his loyalties lie. He's obviously going to be a leader but he hasn't fully developed those qualities yet. That was the important thing in the first season and now I'm trying to mature him as we go. That's the exciting thing about having all this time to play with.

How do you prepare for the sword fights - they look pretty intense?

I go and see a personal trainer whenever I'm doing the series because I tend to fluctuate weight-wise. I go stick-thin if I don't work out and I like to see Jon as quite a stocky guy. That helps with the sword fighting, as you need to realise that these people have wielded a sword their whole lives – they've lived on the training yard. They're not intellectual like we are, they don't spend their time studying in rooms, they throw swords about and fire arrows and spears. It was important to me that he was physically like that.

Are you well looked after, or have you ever managed to get hurt?

They pad you up and do all the safety stuff but you do take knocks. It's just inevitable. ▶



Jaime Lannister

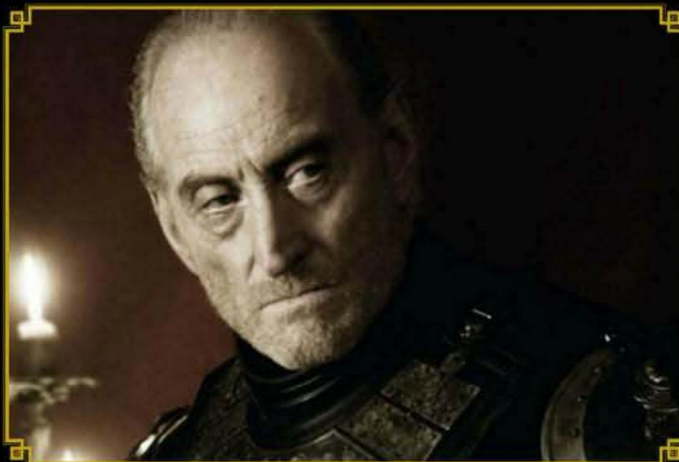
Nikolaj Coster-Waldau is the Kingslayer

Jaime Lannister does some bad things, to put it mildly! How do you make him likeable?

I haven't worried about that. I like him! You might not want him as your friend but I think you like him as a character. What I like about him is that he's very honest. It might be very inappropriate at times but if you look at the scenes he has in season one with Ned and Catelyn Stark, he says some things that really anger them, and the reason it angers them is because he's being truthful. The fact is that he wouldn't have said what he did if they hadn't insulted him first. They were always going 'You, Kingslayer!'. Basically saying, 'You're a piece of shit!'. Jaime isn't going to take that. He will call you up on it and say, 'Let's talk about that and let's talk about you, you high and noble man'. When you see those scenes, you understand him.

Why do you think *Game Of Thrones* has proved so popular?

They're just fascinating characters and it's a fascinating world. It's not too foreign and you can still recognise these people because they still act like we do. They're very selfish, power hungry and lustful so you can relate to them. At the same time, you have some amazing worlds that are almost like our world, but still have this twist. Then there's that whole, 'Imagine that dragons existed!' All the people in *Game Of Thrones* are like, 'It's ridiculous, there's no such thing as dragons'. And then in the final shot of season one, you actually find out that there are dragons – and it looks like a dragon because HBO has got the money to do it properly. But like with any drama, it has to be all about the characters. I've watched the first season of *Homeland* and I devoured that. It's the same with *Game Of Thrones* – the story is really intriguing but it won't work if you don't care about the people.



Tywin Lannister

Charles Dance is Lord of Casterly Rock

What is the appeal of *Game Of Thrones* to you?

I think of it as a grown-up *Lord Of The Rings* as it's just got more rompy-pompy in it! The fact that it's done on television in the way that it's being done is extraordinary. The production values are phenomenal and the quality of the writing is also pretty bloody good.

Do you see Tywin Lannister as a bad guy?

Not particularly. I think he's principled – it might not be your principles or my principles but that's what he lives by. Even though it's a fantasy world, it's medieval and it's feudal. In feudal societies, people have their positions and as long as everybody is happy to stay in their positions, society will continue. It's when people want to jostle their way up to the higher positions that trouble starts. Tywin Lannister is quite lucky in that he is a fair way up the social scale and he knows how a man in his position should behave. It's his job to rule his bit of the Seven Kingdoms and he will do that in the best way he can. There's a sense of fairness about him and he believes in his form of rightness.

You've appeared in many period dramas. Do you think *Game Of Thrones* has much in common with them?

Game Of Thrones is mythical but it's based on a kind of reality. Because of the way that the art department has dressed people, the kind of props we use and the quality of the writing, it's very easy to believe in this world. When you're dealing with one of Shakespeare's historical plays, you're really dealing with the interpretation of history by Tudor historians. Historians of other periods might have a very different view of that particular bit of history, so there is myth in both areas.





Catelyn Stark

Michelle Fairley is the King of the North's mum

What do you like best about *Game Of Thrones*?

What's wonderful about David Benioff and DB Weiss is that they write to your strengths. It's very character driven and it's not just the obvious stuff. It's about getting to know the characters well, the humour and the different layers that they incorporate into those scenes. It's not just about getting the plot through.

Did you refer to the original books at all?

The way George RR Martin writes in the novels, is that he basically gives each character a chapter so not only is it about telling the plot, it's about conversation with other characters and internal monologues as well. He writes their thoughts, which can be extremely helpful to you as an actor when you're pondering what your character is thinking in a particular situation. But when it comes to working on the show itself, it has to come from the actor, the person. David and Dan are always on set and they listen to everything. It's a very interesting manuscript to have and you can use it or not use it, because the script sometimes changes it, mixes it up as well. But you can see your character growing and changing over time, and Catelyn does that. She becomes an operator, a warrior woman. She starts thinking like a man, a tactician.

Will she ever come to accept Jon Snow as part of the Stark family?

I think it's an instinctive reaction that she can't help – she can't hide it. It's like her memory of Ned's infidelity, as she sees it. That's the fascinating thing about her, she cannot control that. She hates him!



Ser Jorah Mormont

From *Downton* to Westeros with Iain Glen

You've appeared in both *Game Of Thrones* and *Downton Abbey*. Do you think they have much in common?

They're both costume dramas, in a way, but they're very different. In both of them you put on a costume, which is definitely one of the important routes, as an actor, to adopting a different person. You put on a different set of clothes and that makes you stand, feel and behave differently. With *Downton* it was all suits and being done up, while *Game Of Thrones*, for me anyway, was all about loose material. It was always dirty and muddy, which all helps to create that world.

Do you think *Game Of Thrones* is like an imagined historical drama?

What an imagination George RR Martin has! The filmmakers have tried to be as faithful to the books as possible but what has maybe made the series appealing beyond people's expectations is the fact that the reality they've created is really plausible. If you gave a kid one of the books and told them, 'This is a piece of history that shows how people behaved so many hundreds of years ago,' they'd read it and go, 'Yeah, that feels true. I can imagine that's how people vied for territories, how dynasties operated and that those were the politics that were going on'. It has a real guttural, visceral truth to it.

The TV show certainly hasn't shied away from depicting the more graphic scenes in all their glorious detail...

That's just the world that's being portrayed. It's a very dangerous world, a world where you can die very quickly, and that's just part of the characters' daily lives. That creates a kind of intensity because death is always very close by – unlike in the world in which we all live now. As for the sexual side of it, that just feels very much like a part of George's world in the books. I'm glad that the production company have been brave enough to portray what the books did, and don't get all PC about it, because that's part of the plausibility of the world they live in. 🐉



X

is for

SFX

W FACTOR W



How the fortunes of sci-fi TV have changed over the years – and why we're living in the greatest period for the genre in history...

Words • Jayne Nelson

We're not sure how many of you watch American sitcom *Parks And Recreation* – not many, we'd wager – but here's a little moment from the show that should resonate. One of the characters, Ben, is feeling miserable. He's a known geek (he even owns a Batman costume!) and is often the butt of his colleague's jokes.

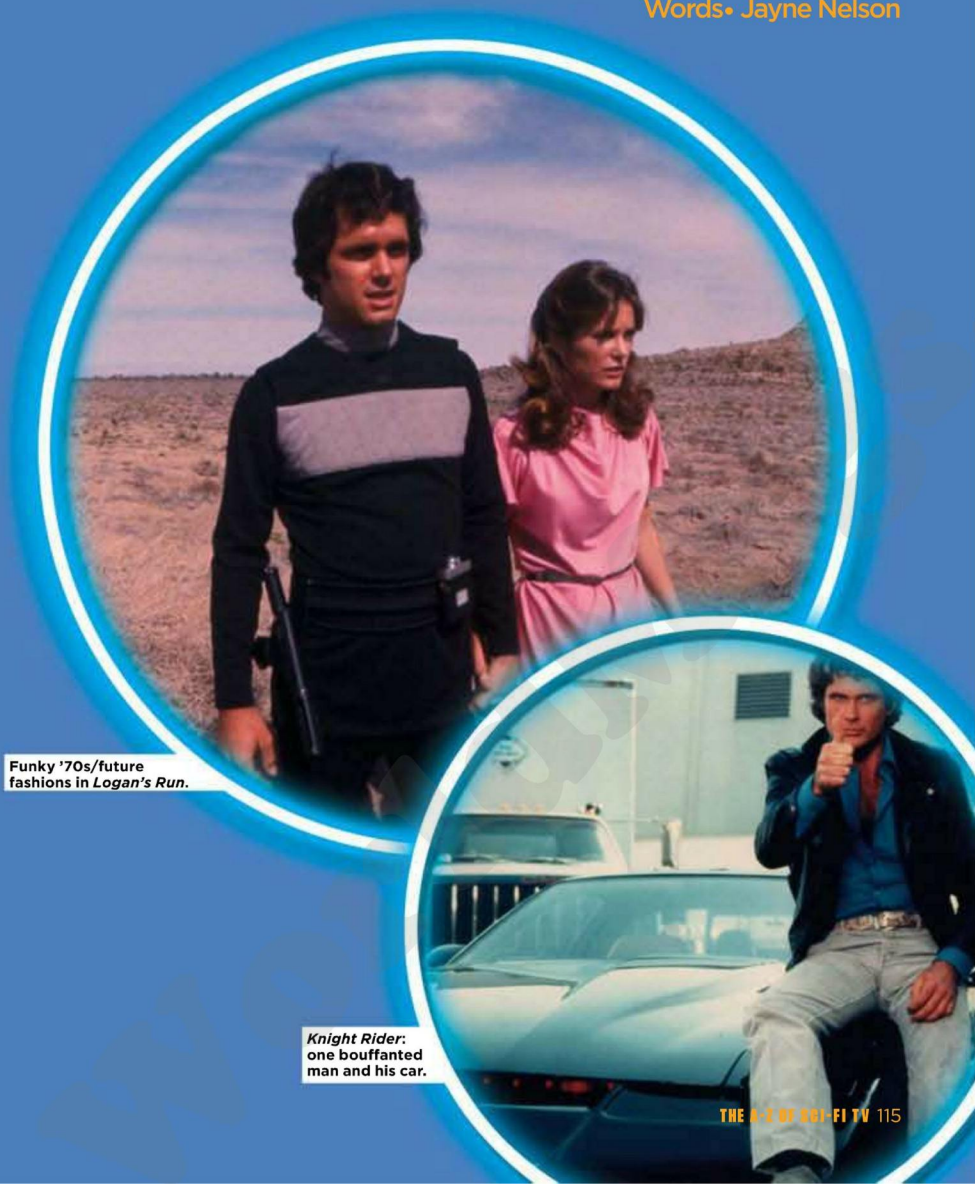
"What is wrong with you today?" one of them asks, irritated by his behaviour. "Did they cancel *Game Of Thrones*?"

"They'd never cancel *Game Of Thrones*!" Ben replies, aghast. "It's a crossover hit! It's not just for fantasy enthusiasts, they're telling human stories in a fantasy world!"

There are two interesting points to make about this throwaway moment in a show most of you probably don't watch. First: that Ben *isn't* a loser, the kind of geek we're all familiar with seeing in comedy shows (unable to function socially; unable to talk to women; unattractive). He's actually high-functioning, charming and likeable, a change from the norm. This is how geeks can be portrayed on modern telly*, thanks to the fact that so much of mainstream popular culture is dominated by sci-fi. Geeks are everywhere, guys, and you can't tell them apart from "normal" people!

Second, Ben has a bloody good point. *Game Of Thrones* is a crossover hit. It's huge, and not just with the geek crowd – it's one of the biggest shows on TV right now, a genuine watercooler phenomenon, and a sign that while science fiction and fantasy have dominated at the cinema for decades, now it's happening on television. Sci-fi TV isn't seen as a niche genre any more – everybody watches it, everybody talks about it and everybody loves it, Ben's workmates notwithstanding.

It's been a long road – as that guy used to wail at the start of *Star Trek: Enterprise* – but we've finally made it from there to here. Sci-fi on the small screen is bigger than it's ever been. And here's how it was done...



Funky '70s/future fashions in *Logan's Run*.

Knight Rider: one bouffanted man and his car.



1950s

SAMPLE SHOWS: SPACE PATROL, THE TWILIGHT ZONE, FLASH GORDON, QUATERMASS, THE ADVENTURES OF SUPERMAN

TRENDS: Unsurprisingly, given that the '50s was the beginning of the Space Age, many shows of this era focused on spaceships, exploring other planets and/or meeting aliens (or they featured aliens as stars, such as Supes). Often they were camp and aimed at younger audiences, mainly because kids were lapping up sci-fi like it was going out of style.

A few clever souls managed to play with the format a little so that adults would actually *think* after viewing. *Quatermass* for example, was possibly the first "serious" sci-fi ever shown on British television, and audiences were so surprised by its tone that they emptied the streets to get home and watch it – the start of "watercooler TV", perhaps, as they all must have congregated at work the next day to discuss it. Peter Cushing memorably freaked out viewers in 1954 by playing a man from 1984 on the BBC's *Sunday Night Theatre*. And over in America, Rod Serling saw out the decade by introducing us to a peculiar place known as *The Twilight Zone*.

The era may have been one of rayguns and Cold War-inspired radioactive monsters, but that didn't mean some people weren't taking sci-fi seriously.

And shows like *The Twilight Zone* were the primordial pool that other shows ended up evolving from...

SAMPLE SHOWS: STAR TREK, DOCTOR WHO, THE PRISONER, THE INVADERS, LOST IN SPACE, LAND OF THE GIANTS, THE TIME TUNNEL

TRENDS: With the space race in full swing, spaceships and trips to faraway worlds were still in fashion, and shows like *Star Trek* cashed in on the idea of a "final frontier" to tickle the imaginations of those Americans bothered by the fact they'd finally explored every inch of land within their borders. (Where next? Space!) *Star Trek* also proved itself a cut above fellow US shows by taking the time to tackle issues such as racism and war, and it was also the first series in history to be saved from cancellation by a letter-writing campaign. NBC must have reeled in shock, while other networks had to take note: sci-fi fans weren't going to sit there quietly if their favourite programme was threatened...

Elsewhere, Cold War paranoia crept on to the small screen with shows such as *The Invaders* – it might as well have been called "The Commies are already here!" – perfectly reflecting what was happening in cinemas at the time. *Doctor Who* worked hard to make sci-fi an entertaining family experience, but it also wasn't afraid to go a bit loopy from time to time, just to please the new generation growing up using pharmaceuticals. Speaking of which, *The Prisoner* took that LSD-vibe to a whole new level, and baffled a generation in the process. The fact the generation *loved* being baffled was something nobody was expecting, and it opened the doors for more unusual British shows to come.



1960s

"Networks had to take note: sci-fi fans weren't going to sit there quietly if their favourite programme was threatened"



SAMPLE SHOWS: SAPPHIRE & STEEL, LOGAN'S RUN, SURVIVORS, DOOMWATCH, BLAKE'S 7, BATTLESTAR GALACTICA

TRENDS: As anyone who lived through the '70s can testify, it was a bloody depressing place. Doom and gloom suffused the era of Watergate, Vietnam and British labour disputes; in 1979, ITV even went off air for five months! Unsurprisingly, the shows of this period contain a mixture of dystopian survival stories, cynical suspicion of authority figures and general malaise: even in fantastical scenarios, such as *Space: 1999* depriving us of our Moon, or *The Tomorrow People* promising a new generation of super-powered kids who'd grow up to replace us all because we were dinosaurs.

There wasn't much in the way of "jolly" sci-fi at all, unless you count *The Six Million Dollar Man* (which was basically just a spy show with a cyborg) and *Mork & Mindy*, a spin off of *Happy Days*, which was a series built upon the nostalgia of the '50s, and so it broke the mould a little. Basically '70s sci-fi told us that the world sucked, and even science fiction couldn't think of ways to make it better. The '80s, however, took a far more optimistic approach...



1970s



SAMPLE SHOWS: KNIGHT RIDER, AUTOMAN, STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION, ALIEN NATION, WAR OF THE WORLDS, THE HITCHHIKER'S GUIDE TO THE GALAXY

TRENDS: After the misery of the '70s came a decade focused on one thing: money! And with money came lovely, shiny technology, from KITT's gleaming black body to the cool shuttlecraft used by the Visitors in *V* (itself one of the signature shows of the decade, a fact often forgotten today).

Glen A Larson seemed on a mission to make sci-fi as daft as possible with everything from *Manimal* to *Galactica 1980*, while Gene Roddenberry launched his Second Coming with *Star Trek: The Next Generation*. The decade's love of technology and flashy gimmicks bled into the latter, with everything from the Enterprise's holodeck to the reams of technobabble spoken by the characters ensuring it looked as futuristic and cool as possible. *Star Trek's* return to the small screen was such a success – thanks to syndication – that it prompted a slew of spin-offs, each one cementing the fact that there was a huge audience out there for sci-fi. Other TV networks didn't fail to notice this...

In the UK, however, *Doctor Who* was suffering from some peculiar creative decisions and a budget so poor they couldn't even have afforded one of KITT's windscreen wipers. Before the decade was out, it was dead, and British sci-fi was tainted by its failure for a long, long time. Only *The Hitchhiker's Guide To The Galaxy* and *Red Dwarf* kept the flame burning over here, and our airwaves filled up with imported American *Treks*.

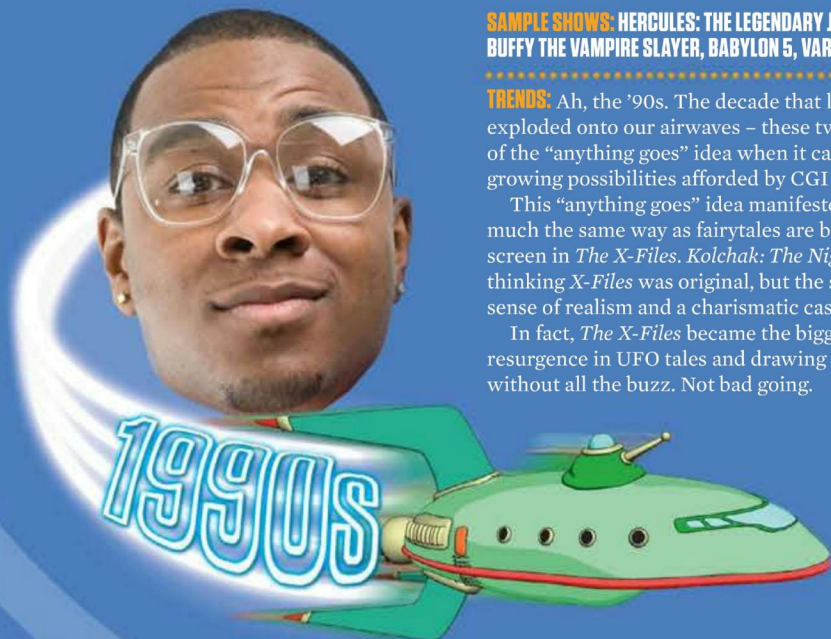


SAMPLE SHOWS: HERCULES: THE LEGENDARY JOURNEYS, XENA: WARRIOR PRINCESS, THE X-FILES, BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER, BABYLON 5, VARIOUS STAR TREKS, FUTURAMA

TRENDS: Ah, the '90s. The decade that launched *SFX* and the decade in which sci-fi and fantasy exploded onto our airwaves – these two events are connected, by the way. The '90s were the start of the “anything goes” idea when it came to making shows, most probably influenced by the growing possibilities afforded by CGI and the fact that the return of *Star Trek* hadn't been a misfire.

This “anything goes” idea manifested in everything from mythology being raided for *Hercules* (in much the same way as fairytales are being raided today) to urban legends being brought to the screen in *The X-Files*. *Kolchak: The Night Stalker* had done the same thing in 1974, so don't go thinking *X-Files* was original, but the show's modern take on old legends, coupled with a breathless sense of realism and a charismatic cast, made it the biggest thing on the planet for a while.

In fact, *The X-Files* became the biggest watercooler sci-fi show in history, prompting a new resurgence in UFO tales and drawing in viewers who might not have watched a fantasy series without all the buzz. Not bad going.



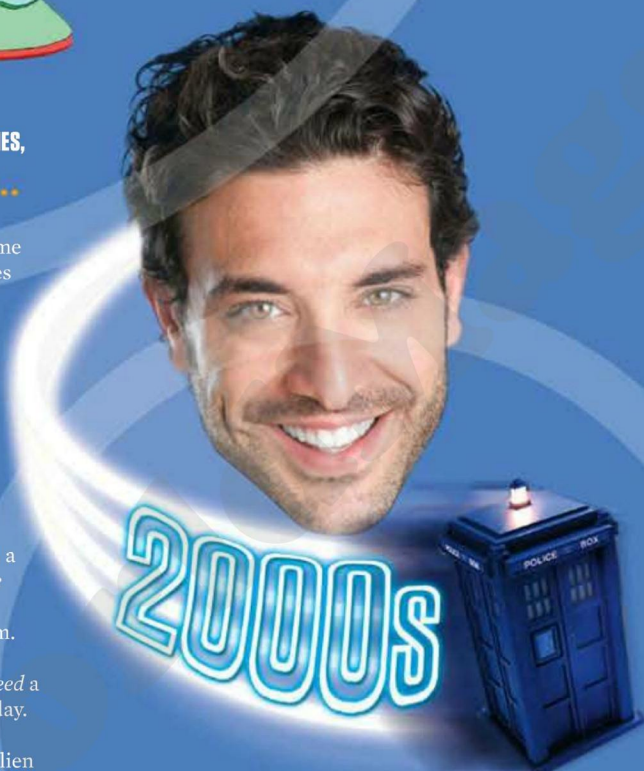
SAMPLE SHOWS: BATTLESTAR GALACTICA, GAME OF THRONES, SUPERNATURAL, THE VAMPIRE DIARIES, SMALLVILLE, DOCTOR WHO, MISFITS, MANY STARGATES

TRENDS: If the '90s were the start of the “anything goes” era, then the '00s have embraced that idea but added sex. Lots and lots of sex. For a show to hit the big time today it has to throw taste and decorum out of the window, from the brothel scenes in *Game Of Thrones* to the endless variations of vampire nookie in *True Blood*. Violence helps, too, as well as sickening plot twists – both *Battlestar Galactica* and *Misfits* have realised that “gritty” and “brutal” can pull in viewers, not to mention swearing a lot (although the cast of *Misfits* wouldn't be caught dead saying “frak”).

Today we're in an era of “something for everyone”. There are fairytales (*Grimm*, *Once Upon A Time*); superheroes (*Arrow*, *Alphas*); horror (*Supernatural*, *American Horror Story*); romance (*The Vampire Diaries*, *The Secret Circle*); even epic, nostalgic fun for the family to watch together (*Doctor Who*, thankfully returned to our screens). One thing that's missing – and something that's pretty much been a constant since the '50s – is a show set aboard a spaceship, or focused on exploring other worlds. With the cancellation of *Stargate Universe* in 2011, that sub-genre died.

But there's a good reason for this: science fiction television has gone mainstream. It's more accessible now than anyone could have possibly imagined, and so it's exploring new ground here and leaving the stars alone. At the moment we don't need a show set on a spaceship, because we're too busy exploring the world we live in today. Space is just a distraction from where the real story is: here, on Earth, with us.

However, we'd bet money that it won't be long before someone thinks, “I miss alien worlds. Let's make another *Star Trek*!” Spaceships are cool, after all... 🚀





Year 3000

An alternative history of the universe, as revealed to us by television

Historian • Solomon C Greymatter
Illustrations • Paul Garner

148,000
BCE



Cylons and humans settle a planet where they, presumably, instill them with religions that tear them apart and a love for shiny robots. It seems that the interbreeding led to evolved humans. They are therefore not to blame for *The X Factor*.
Source: *Battlestar Galactica* (2003 version)

1444



Milo Rambaldi is born in Parma, Italy. Despite a clear talent for scientific discovery, he is also obsessed with building over-complicated riddles and machinery. Mostly, it would appear to one-up "that show-off bastard Da Vinci".
Source: *Alias*

1622



Duncan MacLeod is killed in a violent struggle, triggering his immortality, but doing very little to stop his hair looking a bit shit. He will go on to get married (once) and fight in several wars, but never quite figure out the hair thing.
Source: *Highlander: The Series*

1753



Liam, from Galway, largely notable for his alcoholism and the worst Irish accent in history, is bitten by Darla and becomes Angelus. In 1898, he is cursed with the return of his soul, and the need to atone. But apparently not for the accent.
Source: *Buffy The Vampire Slayer*

1756



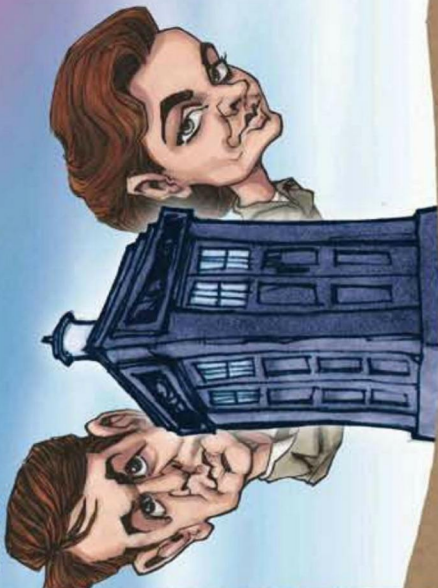
Gordon Shumway is born on the Lower East Side of the planet Melmac - turns out lots of planets have a Lower East Side. After Melmac explodes, Shumway follows a radio signal to Earth where he ends up living with a human family and trying to eat their cat. Source: *ALF*

1928



Earth's Stargate is unearthed at Giza by Professor Langford, who sadly fails to have his first name recorded by history. His daughter Catherine, however, is made famous. The lesson? Always watch out for your glory-hogging offspring.
Source: *Stargate SG-1*

1963



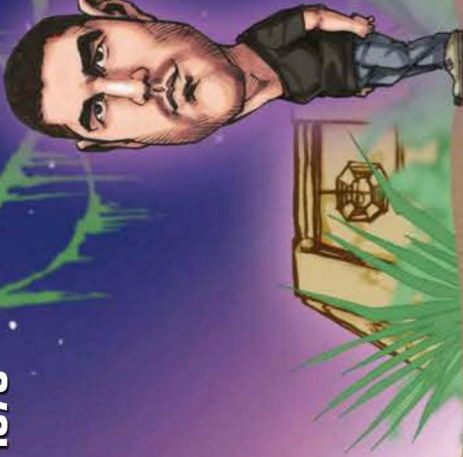
A pair of teachers become concerned at the slackening performance of a former star pupil. Looking to visit her grandad, they discover a police box in a junkyard. They return in 1965, where everyone suspects they've been on drugs.
Source: *Doctor Who*

1967



An unnamed British agent is gassed and taken to a mysterious seaside village where he proceeds to try to figure out what's happening, who is in charge and exactly how many headaches he can provoke in anyone watching.
Source: *The Prisoner*

1970



The Hanso Foundation sponsors the Dharma Initiative on a remote island. It is intended as a research compound where scientists can investigate over-complicated theories and play with forces they shouldn't. It ends badly.
Source: *Lost*

1976



Leviathan transport vessel (and sentient organic spaceship) Moya is born. Captured by the Peacekeepers at an early age, she is bonded with a pilot and forced into service before several squabbling prisoners manage to free her. Which was awfully nice of them, really.
Source: *Farscape*

1980



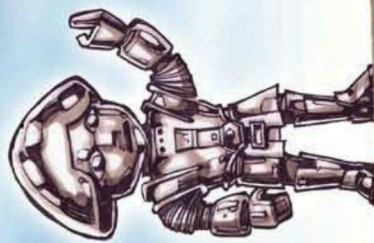
Astronauts Alan Virdon and Peter J Burke hit a time warp while on a mission to Alpha Centauri. They are lost in action and emerge with their chronometer showing 3085. Crash-landing, they discover a world ruled by intelligent apes. That world is Earth. SPOILER ALERT.
Source: *Planet Of The Apes (TV series)*

1983



Sam Winchester is born, destined to be possibly one of the unluckiest people in the known universe. Targeted by demons and other creatures from an early age, he joins his brother on a quest to destroy them and loses almost his entire family in the crusade. But he does get to meet a funny angel. So there's that.
Source: *Supernatural*

1987



Captain William "Buck" Rogers is launched in Ranger 3. A life support malfunction freezes him, and he's discovered in the year 2491. Silver has become the dominating clothing colour and it's also a time full of incredible inventions, based mainly around annoying robotic sidekicks.

Source: *Buck Rogers In The 25th Century*

1992



FBI Agent Dana Scully is assigned to work with the paranoid Fox Mulder. He's right to be suspicious, since she's hired to debunk his wild theories about strange events and alien colonisation by people involved in facilitating strange events and alien colonisation.

Source: *The X-Files*

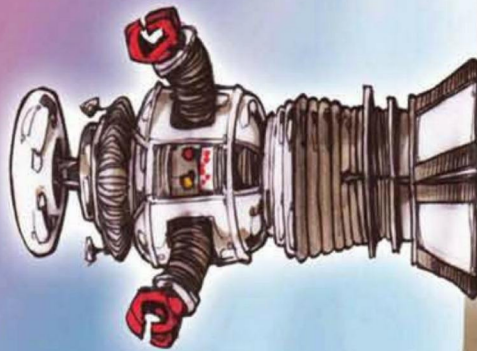
1995



Theorising that one could time travel within his own lifetime, Dr Sam Beckett stepped into the Quantum Leap accelerator and vanished. He awoke to find himself trapped in the past, facing mirror images that were not his own... IT IS TOO SAD TO CONTINUE.

Source: *Quantum Leap*

1997



October 16, and the Jupiter 2 departs. It is carrying a heroic family, a stalwart pilot, a despicably useless enemy agent and a Robot who despite its name, is often more human than any of the crew. A film is later made of their adventures, though this should never be mentioned in polite society.

Source: *Lost In Space*

1999



A misguided attempt to store nuclear waste on the Moon explodes, knocking it out of orbit and killing every single one of the 311 inhabitants of Moonbase Alpha. Just kidding. They travel through deep space at great speed, meeting alien civilisations, because that's what you always do in space.

Source: *Space: 1999*

2001



Buffy Anne Summers dies for the second time by throwing herself into a portal threatening humanity. Contrary to popular belief, she is indeed brought back to life by her friends, but is never sent back in time to launch a chain of lingerie shops. That's someone else.

Source: *Buffy The Vampire Slayer*

2007



2022



2161



Strange anomalies start cropping up, allowing passage between different time periods. This allows a haunted Scots professor, a sexy, tiny underwear-loving zoologist, a tag-along student and others to investigate dinosaurs and other beasts. Their biggest battle is with budgets.
Source: *Primeval*

Submarine seaQuest DSV 4600 is abducted from Earth by aliens. It is returned 10 years later. Darwin the dolphin, sadly, is still present, while Captain Nathan Bridger is largely absent – which is a shame given his experience of great white sharks (a major predator of dolphins).
Source: *seaQuest 2032*

The United Federation Of Planets is incorporated, bringing together various worlds. To protect the different races, a fleet of starships is established to patrol the galaxy, ostensibly peacefully. Section 31, dedicated to seeking out and stopping threats, is... not so peaceful.
Source: *Star Trek*

2248



2517



3000



The first Babylon station begins construction, but collapses and explodes due to sabotage. B2 is started, but collapses and explodes due to sabotage. B3 begins but... You get the idea. B4 is completed! It vanishes 24 hours later. B5 goes online in 2257. There is no room to record what happened.
Source: *Babylon 5*

The renegade crew of the Firefly-class vessel Serenity take on board Dr Simon Tam and, as a frozen bonus, his weird little sister River. Many shenanigans result, but the outcome, including a villainous mercenary kicked into one of the ship's engines, is shiny.
Source: *Firefly*

21st century Earth layabout Philip J Fry is defrosted after 1000 years in stasis. He is immediately re-classified a delivery boy. Sucks to be him. Though he does get to be the saviour of the universe, become best friends with a foul-mouthed robot and get it on with a cyclops.
Source: *Futurama*



Zingers

A collection of sci-fi TV's most scathing insults

Cursemeister • Jordan Farley

"Bite my shiny metal ass"

Bender, *Futurama*, most episodes

Bender's default retort is a burn suitable for any time, any place and often at its funniest when deployed completely out of context. It can be modified to suit any situation, for example: "Lick my frozen metal ass" (while skiing).

"Sookie. I am so over Sookie and her precious fairy vagina and her unbelievably stupid name. Fuck Sookie!"

Pam, *True Blood*, episode 4.12: "And When I Die"

Pam is the queen of one-liners on *True Blood* (thanks in part to Kristin Bauer's joyous deep south drawl), and the pinnacle of her vitriolic verbiage comes in the season four finale. Lucky for Sookie she's not in the room at the time to hear Pam laying the smackdown.

"You're about as much use as a condom machine in the Vatican"

Arnold Rimmer, *Red Dwarf*, episode 2.05: "Queeg"

Rimmer may spend most of his time on *Red Dwarf* as the most humiliated hologram in the galaxy, but he can give just as well as he takes. Case in point – this marvellous put-down of inept super-computer Holly.

Vila: "I always knew you had a friend. I used to say to people, 'I bet Avon's got a friend somewhere in the galaxy'"

Avon: "And you were right. That must be a novel experience for you"

Kerr Avon, responding to Vila Restal, *Blake's 7*, episode 2.07: "Killer"

A perfect example of a retort that out-zings the initial insult in this classic exchange between Avon and Vila in *Blake's 7*. Both cutting, but Avon wins out for sheer bite.

"Frak! Feldercarb!"

***Battlestar Galactica*, every episode (more or less)**

Battlestar Galactica's analogues for "Fuck/shit/damn" (in both series) and "Crap" (in the original series), can be used in exactly the same way as modern expletives without risk of upsetting the censors, for example: "You frakking feldercarb!"

"You're a lot smarter than you look. Of course, you look like a retard"

Cordelia Chase, *Angel*, episode 1.04: "I Fall To Pieces"

Poor Doyle. Not long for this world, he had to put up with this from Cordelia while shuffling about on the mortal coil. Especially funny for the outrageously un-PC use of the word "retard".

"What can you expect from a simpering... devil-eared-freak whose father was a computer and his mother an encyclopedia"

James T Kirk, *Star Trek*, episode 1.24: "This Side Of Paradise"

Kirk and Spock may be BFFs, but after space spores turn the half-Vulcan all lovey-dovey Kirk must snap him out of it by... barking racist abuse and insulting his mum? Oh Kirk.

"You're like a trained ape, only without the training"

Simon Tam, *Firefly*, episode 1.07: "Jaynestown"

Simple, effective, and all the more scathing for the fact it comes from generally mild-mannered Doctor Simon. In Jayne's case it's probably a bigger insult to apes (zing!).

"You moon-faced assassin of joy"

Londo Mollari, *Babylon 5*, episode 1.03: "Born To The Purple"

The Centauri are a bitter race, Londo is an especially bitter Centauri and he's just woken up. Portly Vir didn't know what was coming when he made that vid-call, did he?

"If I was as worried as you, I'd never fart for fear of shitting myself"

Gene Hunt, *Life On Mars*, episode 2.02: "The Safe-Cracker"

If in doubt, always resort to toilet humour. If you've got a tongue as wicked as *Life On Mars*'s Gene Hunt, nothing can go wrong.

"If I want your opinion, Spike, I'll... I'll never want your opinion"

Rupert Giles, *Buffy The Vampire Slayer*, episode 6.07: "Once More, With Feeling"

Aside from being a spiffing slam, the pleasure of this particular exchange is that it's the culmination of a long, drawn-out shift in power between former evil bloodsucker Spike and part-time big softie Giles. Have that, bullies!

"Did the Peacekeepers capture you and steal your brain and replace it with whatever you're using now?"

Chiana, *Farscape*, episode 4.02: "What Was Lost Part 1: Sacrifice"

A zinger that isn't of much use unless you're in a war situation, but if you have no qualms about mocking potentially traumatic memories then this is a classic diss.

Q: "I have no powers! Q the ordinary. Q the miserable, Q the desperate! What must I do to convince you people?"

Worf: "Die"

Worf responding to Q, *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, episode 3.13: "Déjà Q"

Worf spent seven seasons and four movies doing what Picard told him, but with one, effortlessly executed riposte he redeems all respect and proves he's still a warrior at heart.

"You ham-fisted bun vendor!"

The Doctor, *Doctor Who*, episode 8.01: "Terror Of The Autons"

We've no idea what this line delivered by Jon Pertwee's Third Doctor even means, but boy if it isn't a flash of utterly surreal genius.

"Hey, ass-butt!"

Castiel, *Supernatural*, episode 5.22: "Swan Song"

An insult with all the wit of a not-too-bright toddler, admittedly, but the reason this is such a memorable zinger is because it not only comes from the mouth of an angel, but is followed by the badass burning of another angel in holy hell fire. Hot stuff.

"You know nothing, Jon Snow"

Ygritte, *Game Of Thrones*, episode 2.07: "A Man Without Honour"

A line so simple, but so cutting. With five words Ygritte completely undermines Jon Snow's masculinity and his position of power in their relationship – despite the fact that she's the one in chains. It came from the book first, but the Lancashire accent actress Rose Leslie used for the character is what makes it so memorable. 🐻



FROM THE OFFICE OF ROOK INWARD OF THE CROWN
HIDDEN SWORD OF THE CROWN, FIRST TAKEN BY SCOTLAND, REVEALS FOR FIRST

Dear You,

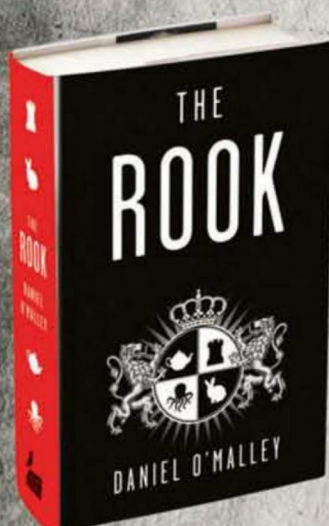
The body you are wearing used to be mine.
But you probably care little about this body's past. After all, I'm writing
this letter for you to read in the future.

You are probably aware of this next part already, since if you are read-
ing this then you have survived several immediate threats, but you are
in danger. Just because you are not me does not make you safe. Along
with this body, you have inherited certain problems and responsibilities.
Go find a safe place, then open the second letter.

Sincerely,

Me

TURN OVER FOR
YOUR EXCLUSIVE
SEX DISCOUNT!



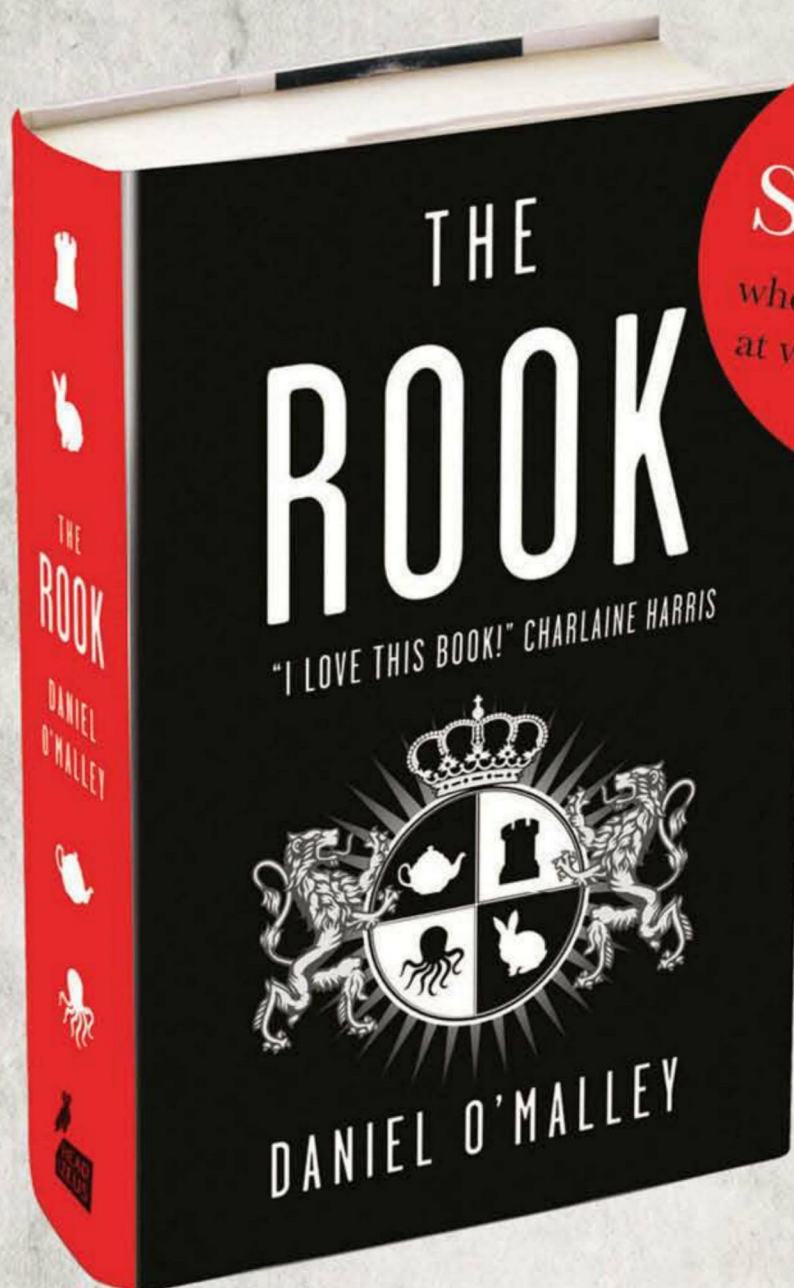
"I love this book... it's complex, funny,
and fascinating all the way through."

CHARLAINE HARRIS

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